

*History of*  
*Blinn Memorial College*  
*By*  
*Charles F. Schmidt*



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THE HISTORY OF  
BLINN MEMORIAL COLLEGE

THE HISTORY OF  
THE MEDICAL COLLEGE

OF THE  
CITY OF BOSTON



HISTORY OF BLINN MEMORIAL COLLEGE  
(1883-1934)

BY

CHARLES F. SCHMIDT

*Professor of History, Blinn College*

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TO

MY WIFE

CLARA LOUISE SCHMIDT

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## INTRODUCTION

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I read the manuscript of this History of Blinn Memorial College by my esteemed friend Charles F. Schmidt with a great deal of satisfaction. I am glad that some one had the happy thought of writing it. The services rendered by Blinn Memorial College are too great and the wholesome influences that have gone out from this institution are too far-reaching and too deep-rooted not to be extolled and perpetuated on the printed page.

To those who were the beneficiaries of these services, and to those who came directly under the wholesome influences of this institution, this little history will be a source of delight, engendering grateful memories and quickening the effect of those inspiring influences cast over and about them while they were students in this school. To others, individuals and institutions alike, this brief history will have its appeal because it is the story of a noble vision realized, of unselfish services rendered, of duties well done, and of inestimable worth while results accomplished.

The fact that this institution, measured in terms of enrollment and of endowment, was never large, and the added fact that Blinn Memorial College, as such, no longer exists, does not at all detract from her greatness. Life is not measured in length of years but in services rendered. Measured thus, Blinn Memorial College lived long and well. She still lives in the lives of many, and her influence for good will continue to live and will be evident in the lives of many for generations to come.

November 20, 1934.

Arthur Niebuhr.





## PREFACE

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On March 28, 1934, the doors of Blinn Memorial College were formally closed, and the doors of her successor, Blinn College, opened.

It was thought wise to write the history of the old college right away while all the records of the various boards and committees, connected with the school in former years, are still in tact, and while most of the men and women, once intimately associated with the educational interests of the Southern German Conference, are still living.

Much more could have been written. However all the important incidents in the development of Blinn Memorial College have been given consideration. In order to get the correct historic facts, the author has made constant use of the written records.

Grateful acknowledgment is due Superintendent Arthur Niebuhr, who was asked to read and criticise this manuscript and to write the introduction, for which he is eminently qualified because of his many years of service on the faculty of the college and because of his acquaintance with the more recent history of the school; to Miss Margaret Cotham, Professor of English in Blinn College, who read the final copy of the manuscript; to Dr. Frederick Eby, of the University of Texas, who gave advice as to plans of getting the manuscript printed and who made helpful suggestions; finally, to my family through whose co-operation I was enabled to spend the time in writing this history.

Charles Frank Schmidt.

July 11, 1935.

Blinn College, Brenham, Texas.

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PART ONE

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ORGANIZATION  
OF  
THE SOUTHERN GERMAN CONFERENCE  
  
THE STORY  
OF  
IMMANUEL INSTITUTE  
AND  
THE ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF  
BLINN MEMORIAL COLLEGE  
(1883-1927)





# THE HISTORY OF BLINN MEMORIAL COLLEGE

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## CHAPTER I.

### METHODISM AMONG THE GERMAN IMMIGRANTS OF TEXAS

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#### MISSIONS ORGANIZED

Methodism was brought to the Germans in Texas for the first time by Heinrich Jung, who in 1846 came to Galveston, where he founded a mission. In a few years other mission centers developed at Houston, Victoria, Industry, and other points; for, spiritually speaking, many of the German colonists were like sheep without a shepherd, a fact which the church in the North began to realize more and more. But, although the Methodist Episcopal Church was prepared to send men to Texas to minister to these emigrants from the Fatherland, the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law had so sharply accentuated the divided American opinion that ministers from the North were no longer acceptable in the South.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, it so happened that the Germans of Texas became acquainted with Methodism just about the time the slave-holding element of the Church was in the process of seceding from the Mother Church and of organizing the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Many of the laymen among the new settlers hardly realized what the separation was all about. Most of them first began to understand when the war was over that they belonged to the seceded church, for all along they had depended for their German church literature on the Methodist Book Concern at Cincinnati, Ohio. In fact most of the German Methodists were anti-slavery in sentiment. Of the fifteen ministers of German Methodism in Texas in 1860, only six

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1. *Jubilaums-Ausgabe Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz*, 1922, p. 15.

were left in 1865, some having gone back to the North via Mexico, others having fallen victims to the war.

When the terrible war was ended and the Church in the North resumed its work in the southern states, especially among the negroes, the long pent-up discontent on the part of many German members of the Church expressed itself in an open desire to join the Mother Church again. There had been a great deal of contention in many of the congregations during the war, and when the Texas Conference convened in Houston, January, 1867, the Reverend Karl Biel, a leading minister of the German group, was there to take part in the re-organization of the conference. One after another individual members or whole congregations withdrew from the Church, South, and joined the Texas Conference.

The work among the German immigrants had to be in their mother tongue for a generation or two at least. Settled largely among their own countrymen, provided with their own literature and teachers for their children, the first generation had little opportunity to learn sufficient English to be benefited by a discourse in English. The source for new recruits for the ministry, however, was the North. Applicants from among the new converts in Texas could be used only provided they were naturally gifted men or were such as had received their education in the Fatherland. Some excellent men came from the North. In 1871, Dr. Ernst F. Stroeter and the Reverend J. J. Brunow were transferred from the East German Conference to Texas and soon became valuable assets to this missionary enterprise in the Lone Star State.<sup>2</sup> Their leadership was soon recognized, for they succeeded in calling the German ministers together for the first district conference that year at Industry. It was at this conference that the first move was made to organize a school for the training of ministers for this mission field. The motion to organize a school was made by the Reverend J. J. Brunow and seconded by Dr. E. F. Stroeter and adopted by the District Conference. These two men even began to take subscriptions in the Industry congregation for the

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2. *Jubilaeums—Ausgabe Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz*, 1922, p. 16.





# SUEDISCHE DEUTSCHE CONFERENZ DER B.M.KIRCHE.

BRENHAM  
Tex.

Nov. 23.  
1893.



F. Beck.



C. Plummer.



J.A. Traepers.



W. Hunsinger.



A. Ulrich.



E. P. Hunsinger.



Henry Dietz.



H. Dierker.



J. W. Hunsinger.



D. Mullins.



J. Hunsinger.



G. Schaefer.



H. Baerke.



JAMES NITZGERAUM, D.D.



J. Hunsinger.



L. Hunsinger.



J. Hunsinger.



H. Hunsinger.



G. Koch.



J. Hunsinger.



G. Hunsinger.



W. A. Moers.



J. Hunsinger.



J. W. A. Witt.



H. Hunsinger.



F. Biedhoff.



C. Hunsinger.



J. Hunsinger.



W. Bucher.



H. Schmalz.



H. Weber.



J. Hunsinger.



G. F. Urbante.



COLLEGE.



W. N. Speckmann.



G. Doerr.

FAKULTÄT  
VON  
BLINN MEMORIAL

school, but the sudden death of J. J. Brunow shortly after the adjournment of the District Conference stopped all activities with regard to this undertaking, for that time at least.

However, the stop was only temporary. Wherever a missionary enterprise is to prosper there must be a constant development of new leadership for that cause. This the leaders of the German Methodists began to see more clearly from day to day. They could not forever depend upon the North for all the additional forces they needed, nor was it desirable at that time to have northern men work among a people, many of whom they could not understand well enough to do them a great amount of good. Therefore the motion made by J. J. Brunow at Industry, 1871, could not be tabled permanently.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE SOUTHERN GERMAN CONFERENCE

The colored membership of the Texas Conference grew rapidly. It became rather difficult for a congregation to entertain the Annual Conference. Furthermore, the association of whites and colored on the conference floor and in committee rooms was not very desirable. Consequently, at the Annual Conference, 1873, at Galveston, a motion was carried that arrangements be made to create separate conferences for the racial groups. This action was indorsed by the General Conference, and the result was that the Southern German Conference was one of the new organizations. It held its first session at Industry, January 15, 1874, Bishop Thomas Bowman presiding. Records show that this conference was organized with 438 members, 73 probationers, 16 pastors, 7 local preachers, 17 Sunday Schools with a total of 473 pupils, and 9 churches with an aggregate value of \$13,550.

The membership of the conference grew fairly rapidly during the next two decades, for there was a great missionary zeal among these pioneer ministers and laymen. Camp-meetings, lasting a whole week or longer, were conducted every summer at Llano, Mason, Fredericksburg,



Industry, Perry, Rutersville, and other places. As the congregations grew in size and influence, individual members of the Church, South, continued to transfer their membership to the Southern German Conference.

The small number of charges in the conference, divided into three districts, with a presiding elder over each district, gave considerable time for visiting communities where new missions could be started. These mission fields often required additional workers in the conference. Then, too, once in a while one or the other of the active ministers had to be replaced by a new recruit. Thus the presiding elders generally came to the Annual Conference with charges that had to be supplied with pastors. The Reverend C. Urbantke says: "One disadvantage against which our conference had to struggle was the lack of men who could take the places of retired ministers or who could take up new charges."<sup>3</sup>

Although the training of ministers in pioneer days did not have to be extensive, yet some training was necessary for a young man before he could enter the ministry. The need of an institution of learning was ever present. It was natural that the college-trained members of the conference should be the ones to originate and keep alive the idea of an institution of learning here among the German Methodists of Texas.

### IMMANUEL INSTITUTE

In 1871 Dr. E. F. Stroeter had been a party to the motion for the organization of a school for the training of young ministers. Later, in 1876, during his pastorate at Brenham, he undertook this task of organizing that school. A committee had been appointed by the Annual Conference to determine, together with Dr. Stroeter, the time, place, and the conditions for the opening of "an institution of higher learning." The committee met in March, 1876, at Brenham, for deliberations. Brenham was chosen as the most desirable place for the location of the school. The school was named Immanuel Institute. Entrance require-

3. *Aus Meinen Lebensfuehrungen*—C. Urbantke, Cincinnati, 1902, p. 150.

ments were stipulated, courses of study outlined, rates for tuition and board decided upon, and the date for the opening set for September 1. But for some good reasons the opening had to be postponed till October 1. Eight young men enrolled. Dr. Stroeter was the whole faculty. A house several blocks from the church and parsonage was rented, in which a classroom was equipped and sleeping quarters for the students arranged.

But the conference had made no provisions, so far, for the financial support of the school, except that the committee had been instructed to provide for a building that would not cost over \$300. Consequently Dr. Stroeter had to pay all the bills, trusting that the conference would reimburse him. Very modest, indeed, were the askings for the first efforts of the Southern German Conference in its educational program, for the report stated that the total cost for the year was \$52.75!

However, this small conference, consisting of about a thousand members, was not prepared to support an educational institution at that time. After due consideration, therefore, the Annual Conference of 1878 dropped the matter and dismissed the committee.<sup>4</sup>

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4. Verhandlungen Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz, Sechste Sitzung, 1878.

## CHAPTER II.

### MISSION INSTITUTE

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#### THE VISION BECOMES CLEARER

Although the school project had to be dropped, 1878, the need for a school, like Banquo's Ghost, was ever present. The membership of the conference grew fairly rapidly. Especially did the mission places increase, so that additional forces were needed from year to year. From an educational point of view, the young men who were willing to follow the "call" were not prepared to enter the ministry; for the public schools of Texas, especially the rural schools in which most of these young men received their meager education, were still very backward. Thus the question of training young men to work in the conference presented itself at every session.

For a few years after the first attempt to build a college, the records of the Church are silent on this question. From 1880 to 1882, however, new life was infused into this little mission field by the transfer of men from northern conferences to Texas. Among those coming here at that time were the Reverends Wm. Pfaeffle, Henry Dietz, G. Dossdall, and C. Schuler. All of these men took more or less active part in the development of the educational program of the Southern German Conference.

With new blood infused, and with those who had worked here for years realizing more than ever that sooner or later the school problem would have to be solved, the question was soon taken up again. This time it was the Rev. Wm. Pfaeffle, a man with considerable training and a man with some means, who opened the discussion, but not on the conference floor. He first made sure that he had the support of the type of man who possessed the characteristics and qualifications that promised success.



## THE REVEREND CARL URBANTKE

With this in mind, the Reverend William Pfaeffle approached the Reverend Carl Urbantke with these words: "We must build a mission institute or our work here will gradually come to naught, and you are the one who has to take it in hand." Mr. Urbantke was greatly surprised and would not consider the thought at all, but as Mr. Pfaeffle was very insistent and as other ministers indorsed his idea, Urbantke finally agreed to undertake the task.

Perhaps no other man has made a more lasting impression on this little conference than has the Reverend C. Urbantke. It required a man of his type to undertake a project that had so little promise of ultimate success. With only a little over twelve hundred members in the conference to rely upon for financial support, and most of them poor people, there was little to encourage one in the undertaking. But the organizer of Mission Institute was a man with a child-like faith, a man with an heroic spirit. He had been trained largely in the out-of-doors. His education, of course, was only elementary.<sup>5</sup> Yet the education he had was thorough. Furthermore, he was a man of superior intellect, and able and willing to put himself to a hard task. Working with great consecration, he gave the school a conservative yet wholesome administration for sixteen years.

The board, in course of time, adopted a plan of expansion that went faster than the President thought wise. This finally led to his resignation. We let this pioneer educator speak for himself here: ". . . The trustees followed a plan according to which the school was soon to develop into a college. To this I could not agree, because we lacked the students who were prepared to pursue college courses. It has been the experience in my life that our labor will be successful only when we do that which God gives us to do. All premature would-be-greatness results only in sickly caricatures, of which there are so many in the world.

"Due to these differences of opinion, some friction de-

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5. *Aus Meinen Lebensfuehrungen*—C. Urbantke, Cincinnati, 1902, p. 151.

veloped, which made me feel that the board desired to put some one else into my place. I therefore sent in my resignation, June, 1899, which was accepted."

This straightforward statement was characteristic of the man. He was as severe with himself in his endeavor to live up to the highest Christian principles as he was exacting of his students and fellow ministers. Thorough in his classroom work, frugal in his administration of the affairs of the school, he was, at the same time, kind and considerate in his dealings with his fellow men. Under his careful guidance, the educational project grew and developed into an institution that served its generation well.

### CONFERENCE ACTIONS

The Reverend C. Urbantke also laid down as a condition for his acceptance of the task of organizing a school the agreement that the conference give its unanimous indorsement to the Reverend Wm. Pfaeffle's plan. This indorsement was given by the conference during its regular session, November 30 till December 4, 1882, at Seguin, Texas, when the following recommendations of the Committee on Education were adopted: "Furthermore, we wish to give expression to our conviction of the need of organizing an institution of learning within the bounds of our conference, where especially young men, desiring to enter the ministry, may receive training. We indorse Brother Pfaeffle's plan and accept with thanks his gift of \$500. We further recommend that Brother C. Urbantke take in hand the organization of the school.

"We nominate the following brethren to constitute a Board of Education to assist the Reverend C. Urbantke: M. M. Mann, L. A. Niebuhr, the Reverend J. A. Albrecht; the Presiding Elders are to be ex-officio members of the board."<sup>6</sup>

The same conference at Seguin took up another matter pertaining to education. In 1838 the Methodists had founded a school at Rutersville, Texas, naming both place and school after Dr. Martin Ruter, a member of the New

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6. Zehnte Sitzung Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz, 1882, p. 55.

York Conference and president of Alleghany College, at Meadville, Pennsylvania, who had been appointed to do missionary work in Texas. Coming to this state in 1837, Dr. Ruter did some excellent work traveling, preaching, and laying plans for an educational institution. There was a great need for educational institutions in those days, but Dr. Ruter's work was soon ended. Because of overwork and exposure to extreme winter weather, he died in May, 1838, at Washington, Texas. By the liberality of the Congress of the Republic of Texas, however, and through gifts of private persons, the school was endowed in 1838. But the endowment being all in land, the trustees were left without the necessary funds to operate the school; consequently the teachers were given land in lieu of money for their salaries.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the young Republic of Texas at that early date refused to grant charters to sectarian institutions, all of which was more or less discouraging. The school was continued till the Civil War. After the war some interest was aroused for its reopening, but the property had suffered very much and the needed funds were not forthcoming. The Southern German Conference being interested in the building of a school, thought that something might be gained by purchasing this partly deserted school property at a nominal price. Consequently a committee was authorized to buy the Rutersville property, provided it could be obtained for \$1,000 or less. This was done.<sup>8</sup> The Reverend Wm. Felsing was appointed to take charge of the school, and for a few years there was quite an enrollment, largely, however, in the elementary grades. The Southern German Conference kept the school intact for a while and placed it, together with Mission Institute, under the supervision of one board. When the continuance of the Rutersville school was no longer feasible, the property was deeded to the German Methodist Church there, and the school supplies turned over to Mission Institute. All collections and funds gathered in the conference were directed to the improvement of the conference school at Brenham.

7. *History of Methodism in Texas*—Thrall, Houston, 1872, p. 48.

8. *Zehnte Sitzung Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz*, 1882, p. 52.

## A SMALL BEGINNING

It was the plan of Wm. Pfaeffle to make a beginning, however small, and expand the school as changing conditions from time to time required. To start the project, he donated \$500. In connection with the opening of the school, Carl Urbantke writes: "Coming home from the conference, Brother Pfaeffle and I exchanged residences. [Pfaeffle had been appointed Presiding Elder to the place now vacated by Urbantke.—Ed.] In general, things constituted themselves rather favorably, but the task that had been entrusted to me caused me a good deal of anxiety. The work was new to me and I did not know how to begin. I spent much time in prayer during these days, but also tried to get the advice of men. I wrote to Professor Paulus at Berea, Ohio, and told him how helpless I was with this task on my hands and asked for brotherly advice. I received a kind reply in which this brother gave me many helpful suggestions. He was teaching Theological courses according to manuscripts he had prepared himself to meet the needs of his classes."<sup>9</sup>

This good man, C. Urbantke, was asked to undertake something for which he had no training. Yet the brethren had all the confidence in his honesty of purpose and ability to master the difficulties that confronted this little conference. According to his own statement, he sat up many a night until late hours to prepare his manuscript for his class the following day. All courses were in German and consisted of Sacred History, Grammar, General History, and Rhetoric.

March 28, 1883, instruction was begun with three students in the class. They were Charles Urbantke, son of the founder, Wesley Pfaeffle, and C. F. Blumberg. Mr. Blumberg is the only living member (1934) of this class. The hours from eight to twelve in the morning were given to instruction, and the afternoon to pastoral work, for Mr. Urbantke was also the pastor of the Brenham charge, and the nights were used for preparations for the next day. It was strenuous work.

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9. Aus *Meinen Lebensfuehrungen*—C. Urbantke, Cincinnati, 1902, p. 150.



There was no school building to begin with. The class met in the German Methodist Church, the Sunday School annex of the present Fourth Street Church of Brenham. To get the funds for a suitable building was the task of Wm. Pfaeffle. This he did as he went from charge to charge on his district, so that during the summer of the first year the first piece of ground was purchased, on which a house was erected with one fairly large classroom and four smaller rooms which served as sleeping quarters for students. This building is still standing on the campus.

For three years Carl Urbantke served as the only teacher of Mission Institute. He was also pastor of the Brenham charge. It was hard work. A man with less determination and faith would have given up the seemingly hopeless task. Some of the ministers of the conference began to lose courage soon after the project had been started and advised that it be dropped. In a situation like this a man of Urbantke's make-up proved his real worth. Wm. Pfaeffle had chosen the right kind of man to work out the beginning of the educational project for the Southern German Conference.

The first teacher added to help Mr. Urbantke was a certain Reverend Joseph Fiedler, who taught English and other classes. There is nothing else on record about this man except that his work was satisfactory and that he resigned in 1886.

Not only did the founder of the school teach and preach for three years, but he also boarded the students in his own home. He received no salary from the school for these years. His only income was the salary paid by the congregation. The Annual Conference of 1885, however, provided that he should give his entire time to teaching and administrative work. His salary was set at \$750, including house rent. The funds for his salary were to be derived from the endowment fund, which was still very small, and from the educational fund of the conference. It was further decided that another teacher be employed who could give instructions in English and other courses. In compliance with this decision, the Reverend C. Schuler

was appointed pastor of the Brenham charge and, at the same time, instructor in Mission Institute. In 1887 Mr. Schuler took up full-time work in the school. He was instructor in English, Music, and History, and for several years served as financial agent of the school. In 1897 he resigned as instructor in Blinn Memorial College and organized a private school of music in Waco, Texas.

The fourth year opened with fourteen students. An annex to the school building had to be added to serve as a dining hall. Considerable additional equipment was needed. With the help of some of the students, Mr. Urbantke built a fence around the school property. He also made benches and blackboards, for there was no money with which to purchase them.<sup>10</sup>

The old custom of conducting public examinations at the close of the school year was still practiced, as was also the custom of having school inspectors make annual visits. These inspectors were appointed at each Annual Conference and were supposed to report at the next session of the conference. One such report reads thus: "We, your committee, are delighted to report that we have attended the examinations of the students of Mission Institute, June 9 to 12, 1887. With gratitude to God we can say that the school has grown and is in a prosperous condition. Thirteen students were publicly examined in courses they pursued during the year. The examinations gave evidence of diligence on the part of the students, but especially of the efficient labors of Professors Urbantke and Schuler."<sup>11</sup>

As time went on, people took more interest in education. Inquiries came about the possibility of adding courses so as to give young people more of a general education, which they could not always get at home at that time. To take in more students, however, and add more courses would call for more room and additional teachers, all of which was possible only if funds could be procured. The Annual Conference of 1886 appointed the Reverend Wm. Pfaeffle special financial agent to gather funds within and without the bounds of the conference.

10. *Aus Meinen Lebensfuehrungen*—C. Urbantke, Cincinnati, 1902, p. 151.

11. *Fuenfzehnte Sitzung Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz*, 1887, p. 53.

It was his task now to make the expansion and greater usefulness of the school possible.

The Reverend Mr. Pfaeffle was one of the prominent characters in the early history of the Southern German Conference and especially in the unfolding of the educational project. He was a man with a fine approach and a power of leadership. It was largely due to his initiative and courage that the school was built at all. He realized that it took a man accustomed to hard conditions rather than the well-trained college man to start the school, hence his choice of Carl Urbantke to be the organizer. It was Pfaeffle's tactfulness largely that got the Reverend Christian Blinn interested in the educational affairs of the struggling Southern German Conference. Pfaeffle's great enthusiasm and zeal to build a greater and better educational institution finally caused him to go back to the northern states to gather funds. Here it was that this friend of education lost his life in a storm at St. Paul, Minnesota, July 13, 1890. His remains lie buried in Prairie Lee Cemetery at Brenham, Texas.

### CHAPTER III.

## ON TO GREATER USEFULNESS

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### A FRIEND IN NEED

It became clear to the leaders of the educational interests of the Southern German Conference that the school would be more helpful and the interest become more widespread if it were possible to enter more fully into the field of general education. What the people wanted and needed was really nothing more than a school offering instruction in elementary and grammar school grades, for there were many settlers who lacked even that much of educational advantages in their communities during the pioneer days of Texas. When people, therefore, asked that the conference school add instruction of a general character, they had in mind courses below the academy rank.

Wm. Pfaeffle faced a difficult task. There was a definite field for an institution to prepare young men for the ministry. But because this field was rather limited, it could be met by this struggling group of Methodists. The number of students in the Theological classes never exceeded a dozen. But to launch out into the field of general education was an undertaking of much greater scope. To prepare young men and, later, young women for the ordinary walks of life required considerably more in the way of equipment, buildings, and teaching force than the funds at the command of the board permitted.

Confronted with this situation, Wm. Pfaeffle received a letter, December, 1886, from the Reverend Christian Blinn, a member of the East German Conference, New York, in which this minister informed Mr. Pfaeffle that he and his wife were contemplating a trip to California where Mr. Blinn hoped to improve his health—he was suffering with asthma—and that he would be pleased to meet some members of the Southern German Conference at San Antonio, where he expected to stop a while on his trip. Pfaeffle showed this letter to Urbantke and the



two concluded that it might be worth while for Mr. Pfaeffle to go to San Antonio to meet the gentleman. It was known that Mr. Blinn was a man of considerable means and that he had made several very liberal donations to needy enterprises.

As a result of the meeting in San Antonio, Mr. Blinn promised to visit some of the charges here in Texas and acquaint himself better with this conference. The climate of California did not seem to improve his condition any, so the return trip was started sooner than originally contemplated. In March, 1887, Mr. and Mrs. Blinn visited Brenham. On getting the information he was seeking, he soon saw what was needed most. "You need a more appropriate school building with several classrooms and rooms for students' quarters," he said. Mr. Urbantke knew very well that his guest was analyzing the situation correctly and let him continue. "Have you any sources where you can get the funds for such a building?" was his further interrogation. "Let me help you a little with that." His host must have felt a great joy that all these suggestions came without any coaching, when Mr. Blinn continued, "I shall pay the salary of a third teacher on your faculty for next year and you see to it that you secure an efficient instructor for your school. As for the building, I shall talk that over with my wife."<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Blinn began to inquire about prices of building material and the attitude of the people of Brenham toward the school. He also began to prepare plans for a building. The next day, with Pfaeffle, Schuler, and Urbantke present, he told them that he and Mrs. Blinn had decided to erect a two-story building with three large classrooms on the first floor and seven spacious rooms for students on the second floor. This announcement was received with much gratitude. A great burden was rolled off the heart of every one present, especially the financial agent, Wm. Pfaeffle.

A meeting of the citizens of Brenham having been called the next day, Mr. Blinn explained to them that he

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12. Aus Meinen Lebensfuehrungen—C. Urbantke, Cincinnati, 1902, p. 158.

intended to give substantial aid to this school, provided the people of Brenham would contribute \$4,000 to an endowment fund. Collectors were appointed at once and about \$3,800 were donated by the city.

The Reverend and Mrs. C. Blinn remained in Brenham for two months. During this time the work was completed, Mr. Blinn supervising it himself, and the building was dedicated with appropriate services. Before leaving for New York, this liberal donor promised to pay, as long as he lived, one hundred dollars annually for the support of needy ministerial students and to add a substantial sum to the endowment fund. This promise he fulfilled the next year (1888) by sending the Reverend C. Urbantke a check for \$10,000,<sup>13</sup> the interest of which was to be used for the support of teachers of the school.

Mr. Blinn kept in close touch with the institution and promised to visit Brenham again. In May, 1891, he was on his way to Texas, but stopped over in Kansas City, where he attended the session of a committee on missions, of which he was a member. Here he was stricken and, in spite of the best medical care, soon died. Mrs. Blinn later came to Texas several times and gave another \$3,000<sup>14</sup> to the endowment fund. This good family had certainly proved a friend in need to the Southern German Conference in her educational problem.

## MORE ACTIVITIES ON THE CAMPUS

With the new building affording better classroom and dormitory accommodations and with the endowment fund greatly strengthened, more activities were noticeable in and about the institution. The enrollment of the year 1886-1887 had been fourteen, but the enrollment of the following year increased to forty-nine students. Eighteen classes, besides those in music, received instruction every day, five days in the week. This work was done by three instructors, one of whom was also pastor of the Brenham

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13. *Aus Meinen Lebensfuehrungen*—C. Urbantke, Cincinnati, 1902, pp. 160-161.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

charge. These classes were grouped into departments known as Preparatory, Normal, Theological, and Music. In the Preparatory Department the classes started as low as the third grade.<sup>15</sup> Students had to be twelve years of age to enter.

Judging by present-day rates, tuition and fees were extremely low. For courses in the Preparatory Department, \$6 per term of twelve weeks was charged, for the Normal course, \$9, and for bookkeeping, \$5; whereas instructions in piano or organ cost \$6, one lesson a week for twelve weeks; and for two lessons a week per term \$10 was charged. Table board was at \$6 to \$7 a month, and rent was 75 cents to \$1 a month. With forty-nine students enrolled, therefore, 1887 to 1888, the president reported a total income of \$654.25 from all departments.<sup>16</sup>

The third teacher added to the faculty in 1887 was Professor John E. Stullken, M. S. According to stipulations by the board, the instructor to be employed must be experienced in his profession, must be a man of sound Christian character and a member of the Methodist Church. Professor Stullken measured up to all of these requirements with other fine virtues to spare. He was scholarly and thorough and a real scientist. There are hundreds of students in Texas and elsewhere today who testify to his sterling Christian character and his ability as instructor in science. In the course of years he built up the science department of the school. He resigned in 1909 to pursue studies in the University of Texas, where he was later given employment in the science department, which position he still holds.

So far Mission Institute was not co-educational. However, requests had been made all along that the school open her doors to girls. To comply with these requests and widen the scope of usefulness of the school, the board passed a resolution at their session, June 19-21, 1888, "opening the institution to both sexes." This of course helped to increase the enrollment somewhat right away. Since the school had no dormitory facilities for girls, those

15. *Catalogue of Mission Institute*, 1887-1888, p. 7.

16. President's Report in Minutes of Board of Trustees, June 19, 1888, p. 69.

coming from out-of-town homes were placed in private homes in Brenham. One of the most prominent homes for girls was that of Mrs. Brunow, just across Fourth Street from the college.

Although the school was denominational, yet its aims were not sectarian. It set before the students the highest ideals, those of Christian life, and sought to implant in the hearts of the students principles of truth and honor. We quote President Urbantke here again:

"Students of all religious faiths were accepted, but all had to submit to rules and regulations based upon Christian principles. Every day was opened with the reading of a passage of Scripture, the singing of a hymn, and prayer. The students had their weekly prayer and Bible hours, led by ministerial students, but open to all and attended by many. Visiting of saloons or engaging in games of chance was not permitted. At seven o'clock in the evening every student had to be in his room. On Sunday every student was expected to attend Divine worship in his own church. No attempt was ever made to proselytise any one for our church. We have sowed the seed of the Word of God, and through precept of Christian teachers have tried to implant into the students that which is right and pleasing to God. That our labor has not been in vain is testified to by many of our students, scattered throughout the State and elsewhere, who love this institution where they have been prepared for their life's work. Many of them are serving as bookkeepers, teachers, and railway and express agents."<sup>17</sup>

The year 1889 showed progress in several ways. The enrollment reported showed a total of 89, of which 16 were girls and 73 were young men. In the Theological classes there were seven students; in the Normal classes, 10; in Music, 15; and in the Preparatory classes, 68. The increase in the enrollment made the employment of a fourth teacher necessary. Mr. C. F. Blumberg, B. S., was

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17. *Aus Meinen Lebensfuehrungen*—Urbantke, Cincinnati, 1902, p. 162.



the one chosen, at first only temporarily, it seems, but from 1897 to 1899 he appears as instructor of mathematics and science. During the year 1889 the charter of the school was changed so that fifteen trustees could be elected. However, in later years it was changed again so that twelve trustees constituted the legal board. Another thing that was done during that year was the passing of a resolution by the Annual Conference authorizing the board to purchase more land for the campus and to enlarge the dormitory facilities so as to meet the needs of the school. The amount to be spent was limited to \$2,000.<sup>18</sup> In compliance with this authorization, the board purchased from the Brenham Street Car Company an acre of land adjoining the campus. On the land purchased was a roomy house and street car barns and mule stables (the Brenham street cars were mule-drawn). The latter buildings were torn down and rebuilt into a dormitory. For years the students called this dormitory the "mule stable." The house on the new addition was used as one of the teachers' cottages. In spite of the improvements made on the school property and a fourth teacher employed, the school remained without indebtedness.

## BLINN MEMORIAL COLLEGE

Members of the Southern German Conference, as well as the Board of Trustees and the members of the Faculty, felt that some memorial should be set up in honor of the name of the family that had been so generous toward the cause of education here among the German Methodists of Texas. And what could be more appropriate than to name the school after the family Blinn? In accordance, therefore, with this general desire among the people, a motion to change the name Mission Institute to Blinn Memorial College was offered by the Reverend Daniel Matthaei at the regular session of the Annual Conference at Freyburg, Texas, January 31 to February 3, 1889, and was adopted. The secretary of the conference was instructed to inform

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18. *Sechszehnte Sitzung Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz*, 1889, pp. 45, 50-52.

Mr. C. Blinn and family of the unanimous action of the conference.<sup>20</sup>

In 1887-1888 appeared the last catalogue of Mission Institute, and in 1889-1890 appeared the first catalogue of Blinn Memorial College. There is no catalogue on file for the intervening year, but a calendar of the year 1888-1889 is printed in the last catalogue of the Institute.

By giving the school the name "college", the leaders simply set for it a goal, or they had a vision that they hoped to realize some day; for the school was still far removed from a college. The great majority of the students were below high school rank, and those in the so-called Normal courses were doing work hardly above the tenth grade. Yet here was an ideal, a dream, that was to come true some day. The institution, begun in a mustard-seed fashion, was to become a college, so they hoped. To attain unto this ideal meant years of planning and gathering of funds and a considerable advancement of the scholastic standing of the student body and of most of the members of the faculty as well. It meant that, as time went by, new and better equipment must be obtained and larger and more modern buildings added. That dream often became a nightmare to the financial agent and the members of the board whenever the question of funds was raised.

The year 1889-1890 shows an enrollment of 114 students, 77 of them in the Preparatory Department. This year we find the names of two assistant instructors on the faculty. One of them was Mr. C. H. Urbantke, son of the president, and one of the three charter students of Mission Institute. The life of this promising young man was brought to an untimely end by a deadly disease, May 25, 1891.

The other assistant instructor that year was Mr. Gustave Urbantke, Jr., a nephew of the president. He received his education in Mission Institute and Blinn Memorial College, later attending summer sessions in the State University. During his connection with the school

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20. Sechszehnte Sitzung Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz, 1889, p. 54.

he gave instructions in the commercial courses, mathematics, education, and other subjects, as changes in instructors and the addition of new courses made shifts of teachers necessary. Besides being active in the classroom, Mr. Urbantke was a great church worker. He was perhaps one of the most popular instructors ever connected with Blinn Memorial College. Through his charming personality and highly practical mind he won many admirers among the students, who fondly called him "Professor Gus." In 1913 he was appointed a member of the State Textbook Board. In the same year, Governor Colquitt tendered him the office of Superintendent of the State Orphan Home at Corsicana, which appointment Mr. Urbantke declined. Later that year the Governor appointed him Superintendent of the Texas School for the Deaf at Austin, where he served creditably for several years.<sup>21</sup>

Professor Wesley Speckmann, B. A., was added to the faculty in 1893 as instructor in mathematics. He was connected with the school in this capacity till 1896 when he went to the North. In 1901 he was employed in Taylor University, Upland, Indiana, as instructor and dean of the post graduate department.<sup>22</sup>

The addition of new members to the faculty, the purchasing of more land for the campus, the erection and enlargement of buildings are, of course, only incidents in the normal development of an institution. When the name of the school was changed from Mission Institute to Blinn Memorial College, there was no change made whatsoever in the organization or policy of the school. "What's in a name? That which we call rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." Yet the name "Blinn" has become very dear to many since the year 1889.

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21. *Blinn College Bulletin*, March, 1903, p. 4.

22. *Blinn College Monthly*, February, 1901, p. 5.

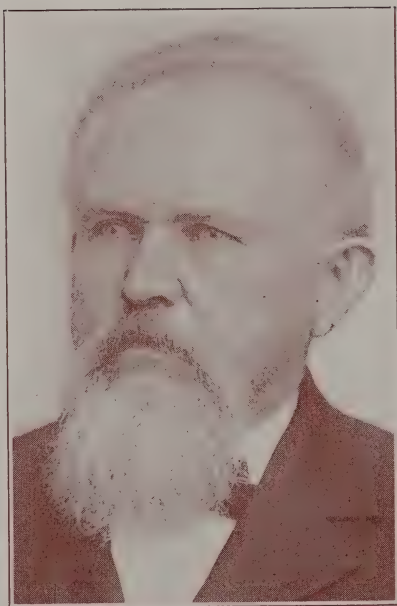
## WELL DONE

The man who was the guiding genius during the first sixteen years of the school's existence now found old age making its demands. Furthermore, the school was slowly getting out of its primitive stages. The elementary, or preparatory, classes were gradually getting smaller and the more advanced classes were growing in size. It was about time to get the school standardized and affiliated with higher institutions of learning in the state. To bring all of this to pass required a leader more or less conversant with the organizing and conducting of high schools and academies and their relations to the colleges and universities of Texas.

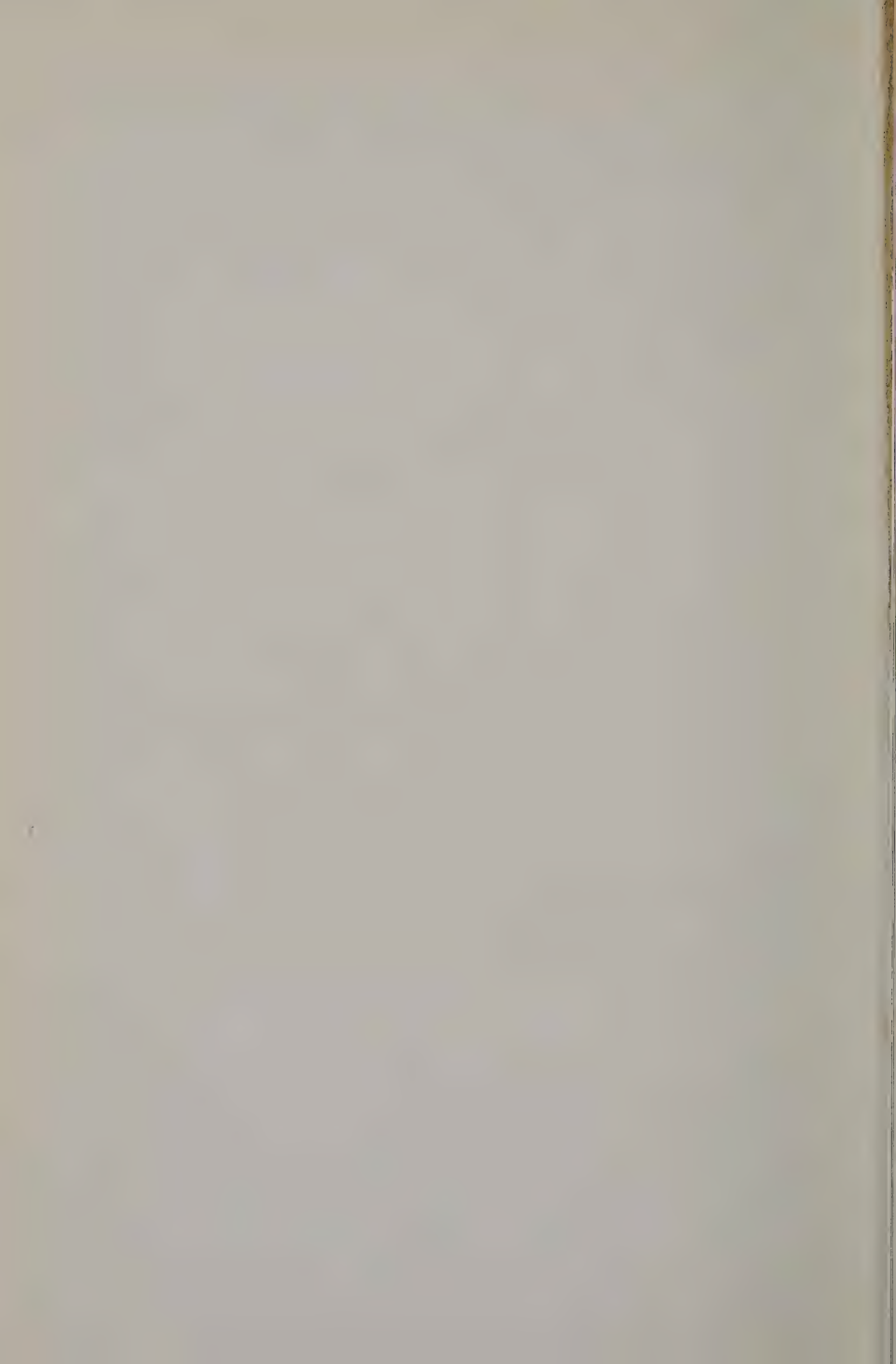
Mr. C. Urbantke had by this time accomplished a great worthwhile piece of work. Who would doubt any more that he was the God-chosen man to start the educational institution the Southern German Conference needed? With no college training whatsoever, with nothing in hand and little in sight, he gave the institution such a momentum that it has served for over fifty years and, we hope, will continue to serve many more years. He had three students to begin with, but when he retired the enrollment had passed the one hundred mark. He had no building for his first class, yet in 1899 there were six buildings on the campus valued at \$16,000. At the time of his retirement the curriculum offered two years of preparatory work for admission to the Academy, a three years' Normal course, and a four years' High School course, besides the Theological and Music courses. The endowment fund had grown beyond \$30,000, and there was a building fund of about \$5,000. For the first few years Mr. Urbantke was the entire faculty; now there was a faculty of five efficient instructors. More than all this, he, together with his colleagues, had stamped upon the school certain characteristics for which it became known, among these being thoroughness, thriftiness, and a conservative and earnest Christian spirit.

But there were those who felt that, although he had served his day and generation well, a change in the administration of the school now would be desirable. His





REV. CARL URBANTKE



highly sensitive soul easily discerned this. In 1899 he tendered his resignation. The board of trustees accepted his resignation. But appreciative of his heroic service in behalf of the school, the board made him president emeritus of the institution for the rest of his life. In 1902 he accepted the pastorate of the Brenham charge. After a few years he retired again, and in 1912 his useful life ended.

## CHAPTER IV.

DOSDALL AND PLUENNEKE ADMINISTRATIONS  
(1899-1901; 1901-1909)

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A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

At the close of the Urbantke administration and during the years immediately following, a transition from the old school of a rather elementary nature to that of academy rank took place. This change was due to various influences. Certain members of the faculty were responsible for this, but the changing conditions in the standards of the public schools of Texas also helped to usher in higher standards of entrance and graduation requirements.

During two years of this period of transition the Reverend Gottlieb Dosdall was president of the school. He came to Texas from the Northwest German Conference in 1876. In 1887 he was elected a member of the board of trustees, on which he served till his election to the presidency of the institution. He was not a school-trained man, yet he was an educated man and an outstanding minister in the Southern German Conference. It seems that he accepted the appointment somewhat reluctantly, and he soon discovered that he was not the happiest in the work, for in 1901 he resigned to enter the North German Conference.

During the two years that Dosdall was at the head of the school, several changes and improvements along various lines were made. The faculty, for instance, was strengthened by the election of Mr. E. W. Winkler, B. Lit., M. A., as instructor in history. He was a graduate of the University of Texas, and as far as scholarship and equipment in his field of work was concerned, he ranked among the strongest teachers that have served this institution. He remained in Blinn till 1903, when he accepted the appointment as State Librarian. He was later appointed librarian of the University of Texas, in which capacity he served till recently. Mr. Winkler is an authority on the



history of Texas and the Southwest, and in this field he has done a good deal of research work.

Other prominent members of the faculty were J. L. Neu and John Pluenneke, both of whose lives and services will be discussed later.

In an interesting report, made by President Dosdall to the Annual Conference at Seguin, December 10, 1899, he said in part: "From the small and insignificant beginning seventeen years ago, our school, although not a college of the first rank, has developed into an institution that meets the needs of our conference. In deed, its development has surpassed all expectations. . . ." In this same report it is stated that there was a net gain of \$1,200 in the school budget that year, and that this surplus had been added to the endowment fund. In a later report he recommended that the board and the conference look forward to the erection of a larger and more modern building. The Blinn building was no longer meeting the needs of the school adequately. It was left for a later leader, however, to erect that building.<sup>23</sup>

The academic course, which had been added in 1893, was, according to the classifications of that time, really a high school course, and marks the beginning of competition with the high schools of the State for the next two decades. In 1900-1902 this department had only six students enrolled, while in 1912-1913 there were 99 enrolled in the various classes of this department. However, from the latter year on, there was a gradual decrease noticeable in the number of students registered for this kind of work. This decrease was due to the better facilities in the high schools throughout the State.

In 1900 the whole instruction plan was reorganized. We read from the "Blinn College Monthly", December, 1900, as follows:

"With the opening of this session the department plan was inaugurated, and thus far has proved very satisfactory in its operation. The sciences, (geography, physiology, physics, and chemistry) were as-

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23. 27te Jahressitzung Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz, 1899, p. 14.

signed to Prof. Stullken; the mathematics (advanced arithmetic, bookkeeping, algebra, and geometry) to Prof. G. F. Urbantke; the histories, (Texas, United States, and General) to Prof. Winkler; English (advanced grammar, Rhetoric, and literature) to Prof. J. L. Neu; and German and Theology to Prof. Dossdall. This redistribution enables each teacher to concentrate his best efforts; better teaching and a great deal of good to both students and teachers has been the result."

While Dossdall was at the head of the school, special privileges were granted by German Wallace College at Berea, Ohio, to two graduates of Blinn Memorial College each year. In a resolution by the Board of Trustees of Blinn, we read: "Resolved that we gratefully accept the offer of the trustees of German Wallace College, granting the privilege of sending annually two graduates of Blinn Memorial College, who for two years are to be exempt from the payment of tuition, room rent, and incidental fees."<sup>24</sup>

Mrs. Ida Harris was employed in 1900 as teacher in piano, organ, and harmony. She held this position till 1907. Some excellent work was done in her department. The same year Mr. Albert Cohn was given a place on the faculty as a teacher in clarinet and violin. He taught only one year. The music teachers were not placed on a salary basis, but received the tuition from the music students.

The school was thus getting away from its small and elementary stages and was growing more hopeful and courageous. There were, however, conditions on the campus and in the city that had to be remedied should the school, now taking on greater dimensions, prosper and grow much longer.

## WATER AND TYPHOID

A tropical storm in 1900, known as the destructive "Galveston storm," caused a change to be brought on in the water supply on the campus. So far a well with a

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24. *Blinn College Monthly*, January, 1901, p. 6.

windmill had furnished the water for the school, but this storm, which was rather strong at Brenham, blew the windmill over, damaging it considerably, so that the school authorities did not repair it, but instead had the water system of the city extended to the campus. Contaminated as the water from the well must have been, it was not much improved by coming from the city pumps, because for years Blinn had typhoid fever rather frequently among her students. One family sent four sons to this institution in succession, and three of them contracted this dreadful disease, one case proving fatal. The year that this young man died of typhoid fever, two others suffered the same fate, and only as late as 1923 did Blinn have her last case of typhoid fever. Quoting from a report in the **"Texas Stern"**, 1903, by one of the trustees, we read:

"The well, which at times has had almost undrinkable water which endangered the health of the students, will be closed up. Only rain water and water from deep wells will be used in the future."

Water alone, of course, was not the cause of this trouble. Only in 1905 was the school connected with the city sewer system.<sup>25</sup> Thanks, however, to scientific health officers, deeper wells, better water and sewer systems, as well as to better sanitary conditions in general, typhoid in Brenham was finally stamped out.

### DR. JOHN PLUENNEKE

Dr. John Pluenneke, M. A., D. D., was the son of a pioneer Methodist minister of West Texas. After having received his elementary education at home, he entered German Wallace College at Berea, Ohio, and graduated with the B. S. degree from this institution in 1887. Soon after this he took up work in the Southern German Conference. From 1892 to 1896 he was instructor of Science and English in Blinn Memorial College. He resigned this position to accept the pastorate of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of New Orleans. In 1901, when he was elected to

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25. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, B. M. C., 1905, p. 84.

the presidency of the school, he was serving as Presiding Elder of the San Antonio District of the Southern German Conference.

Having been called on to deliver the address at the commencement exercises of Central Wesleyan College, 1906, he was honored by that institution with the degree of Doctor of Divinity. It is not known by many that Dr. Pluenneke received a letter from his Alma Mater shortly after this, informing him that this institution had planned the same honor for him and that they were sorry that another institution had come first. In 1909 he wrote his thesis which completed his work for his M. A. at German Wallace College.

Dr. Pluenneke was a man of exceptional intellectual powers, a thorough scholar, an independent thinker, and a gifted orator. In the classroom he had few equals and none to surpass him. It mattered not whether he was teaching a class in history, English, or Bible, his presentation of the subject-matter for the period was always fascinating. With all his excellency as a teacher and speaker, however, he was a humble Christian, the central theme of his eloquent messages being Christ.

During his administration Blinn was in her golden age. In the year 1907 to 1908, the enrollment reached a total of 239, the highest in the history of the institution. The faculty, including the president, consisted of nine well-prepared instructors. It was during his time as president that the controversy about the location of the college was up, and the main building was erected.

Dr. Pluenneke served as president of the school till 1909, when he requested to be released of administrative duties and was given the instructorship of Theology and History, in which capacity he served till 1915. In the fall of that year he accepted the pastorate of the Austin Avenue Church of Seguin.

It was war-time. Dr. Pluenneke, well informed in European history and able to draw his own conclusions, was thoroughly disgusted with many of the wild stories that war propagandists spread. Being a lover of the truth and being rather outspoken, this good man found himself in trouble all of a sudden. The occasion was a union



Thanksgiving service, 1918, at Seguin at which he delivered the address. The spirit of suspicion, prevalent in many places during that awful time, also controlled the way of thinking of many of his hearers that day. Exception to some of his statements was taken, and the result of it all was that this fine Christian citizen found himself under federal surveillance. Since he felt himself disgraced, and deserted by some of his most intimate friends, this good man, in despair, ended his own life. Dr. Pluenneke, with many others, had become a victim of the World War.

### SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AT THEIR BEST

**Literary Societies.** The value of literary societies among school activities was recognized during the very beginning of this institution, for already in 1887 the Demosthenes Society was organized. Meeting one night each week, it carried out programs of declamations, addresses, debates, and music. Only young men, of course, could belong to this society at that time.

In 1893, the Schiller Literary Society was organized and succeeded the Demosthenes. It became a strong organization, in which both the English and the German languages were used.

During the session of 1902 to 1903 the Philo-Alethian Society had its beginning. It was exclusively for young women, and for years met every Thursday evening. Later, however, it had its meetings on Saturday evening, like the Schiller Society.

A few years later the Olympian Society was called into being, largely as a result of an agitation to have the programs exclusively in the English language.

For the first forty years these organizations were an important part of the life and activities of the school. They were always sponsored by some faculty member. Generally each society gave one public program during the year, and during commencement time they gave a joint program one night. But as so many other activities, literary societies have had their day. During the last ten years it has been practically impossible to interest students

in such organizations. Undoubtedly, there was merit in that kind of work done, which schools are now missing considerably, unless they have found a worthy substitute for these societies.

To give the readers an idea of the importance of these literary societies in the life of the school, the following excerpt from a report on the commencement exercises of 1903 will be helpful:

"On Monday night the literary societies gave their closing festival. The young men students belong to the Schiller Society and the young lady students to the Philo-Alethian. These two names give evidence of the prevailing spirit of this century. The young gentlemen stand by the genuine German poet Schiller; the young ladies hover close to the Grecian. To assist the readers of the **Stern**, who may not be so conversant with languages as the Philo-Alethians are, the reporter would like to give the meaning of this term in German. It means 'female students of the Truth,' or 'lovers of the Truth.' This festival, as well as the concert, was given in Lusk Hall, the largest in the city, which was packed. All those present were fully convinced that these organizations can deliver the very best in declamations, addresses, and music."<sup>26</sup>

**Musical Organizations.** True to the traditions of their ancestors, the students of Blinn Memorial College loved music. The first organization of this kind was the Concordia. It consisted of young men and was directed by Professor C. Schuler. During the session of 1899 to 1900 Mrs. Ida Harris, teacher of piano and voice, organized the Blinn College Glee Club, and Mr. Cohn, teacher of the clarinet and the violin, organized an orchestra. The orchestra did not last long, as Mr. Cohn resigned the next year, but the Glee Club soon began to render some high class concerts. Quoting from the **Texas Stern** again, we read:

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26. Zwanzigste Schulschlussfeier von B. M. C.—John Streit, **Texas Stern**, July, 1903.

"The height of the festivities was reached when the Glee Club and the Music Class, assisted by friends, gave a concert on the last night of commencement. This program was a great credit to Mrs. Harris, our music teacher, and all who took part in it. The people of Brenham showed their appreciation by a large attendance and vigorous applause."

The Arion and the Band were for years under the direction of Mr. D. H. Fischer. The Arion, a male chorus, did some excellent work at times, depending, as in all institutions, upon the talent represented among the students.

**Athletics.** In the early years of the school, we find nothing about athletics. Baseball and tennis teams were organized for years before football appeared on the campus. The latter game came with the election of Mr. G. W. Kopp on the faculty. He coached most of the football teams along with his teaching until 1916, when a teacher with special training in coaching was elected. With that change in the policy of the school, athletics became more expensive. Football was, of course, not self-supporting. A Mr. Soap, B. S., of Baylor University, was the first regularly employed coach. He resigned, however, in the middle of the season to accept employment in journalism with a Waco paper.

**Classroom Work.** Much emphasis was placed on thoroughness as well as on punctuality and regularity in the attendance of classes. A study hall was supervised by the teachers, and all students not in classes were required to be in that study hall.

This thoroughness in classroom work obtained recognition by the University of Texas under whose supervision schools were affiliated with higher institutions in those days. During the session of 1901 to 1902 we find the school announcing affiliation in the following courses: Chemistry, English, German, History, Mathematics, Physics, Physiology, and Hygiene. Other courses were affiliated later, so that by 1924 the school had twenty-two entrance credits with the State University. Quoting from the **Blinn College Monthly**, May, 1902, we find "Extracts"

from the catalogue of the Nineteenth Annual Session, as follows:

"The policy of the school has been shaped by an earnest desire for the greatest good for the greatest number. The expenses are the lowest possible; the courses are extensive enough to accommodate all, yet limited enough to insure good teaching thorough work is required in every case; and the necessity for and the dignity of honest labor is ever kept before the student.

"Character has continually been held before the student as superior to knowledge; and the formation of character as vastly more important than the gaining of wealth or renown. . . ."

**School Publications.** Besides the catalogue, the school began, 1901, publishing the **Blinn College Monthly**. At first it was an eight-page paper, but later it was enlarged to sixteen pages. In 1910 it was discontinued and the **Blinn College Bulletin**, published in October, December, March, and June, took its place. The bulletin was published fairly regularly during the administration of J. L. Neu. After that, 1924, there was a number of short-lived publications, including several "Annuals," until 1931, when the **Jolly Rogers Log**, later changed to the **Log**, was published, and which has now been adopted as the college magazine.

**Library.** The library of Blinn Memorial College, now consisting of over 6,000 volumes and several thousand of periodicals and newspapers, was accumulated through the years through donations by individuals, classes of the college, literary societies, Epworth Leagues, churches, and a small amount set aside annually by the college authorities for library purposes. About 4,000 of the volumes on the shelves are usable. The rest are valuable largely for research or in particular lines of work. As is true of all donation libraries, there was quite a bit of duplication of books and it was often difficult to get just what was needed. The library contains a few rare volumes, some



of them dating back to the early part of the eighteenth century.

E. W. Winkler and especially J. L. Neu deserve perhaps most of the credit for the library. Through their efforts the greater part of this valuable treasure of the college was accumulated and the many periodicals and newspapers, covering publications of ten to thirty years, were collected and preserved. Other librarians were John Pluenneke, C. F. Schmidt, Miss Angela Niebuhr, and Mrs. Alice Clay Watson.

### A CHANGING STUDENT BODY

In looking back over the development of Blinn Memorial College, there passes before the mind's eye a changing student body. In the early years one sees students of mature years as well as younger ones on the campus. It was no unusual thing at that time to see a bearded young man carrying a fourth or fifth reader among his textbooks. Young men and, later, young women came from distant and near-by rural communities seeking the very beginning of an education.

It is also of some interest to note the communities that, for a number of years, sent a rather large number of students to Blinn. Some of the most distant places we find were the Llano river settlements, among them being Hedwigs Hill, Plehweville, Mason, Castell, and others. Family names from these places appearing in the enrollments rather frequently are Brandenberger, Dannheim, Leifeste, Hoerster, Donop, Pluenneke, and Schuessler. Fredericksburg, another settlement in that section of Texas, is found represented with its family names in the student rolls all along from 1890 till 1934. Not quite so distant patronizing centers were Bartlett with its Breihans, The Grove with its Winklers, Perry with its Holzes, Seguin with its Nagles and Blumbergs, also Freiburg, Schulenburg, Industry, Gonzales, and Monthalia.

Some interesting facts in the development of the institution are revealed in enrollments during the fifty-one years. For instance, the Theological classes, for which the school was specifically organized, hardly ever reached

a dozen students in the enrollment. The Preparatory Department, that offering work below high school rank, enrolled the largest number of the student body till 1908, after which it began to decrease and finally became the smallest department in the school. The Academic Department (high school rank) was rather small in 1907-1908, the banner year of Blinn, but by 1914 this department had 99 enrolled. The Commercial Department—bookkeeping, typewriting, and stenography—had rather large classes when other classes began to decrease in size, whereas the enrollment in the Music classes was proportionately high in the early history of the school.

Through the fifty-one years of the school a total of 7,373 students received instruction in the various classes. From 1913 to 1919 summer normals were conducted, which helped to increase the enrollment of those years, and from 1920 on summer sessions became a part of the school's program, which also brought in more students. However, not counting the summer normals and the summer sessions, the year 1907-1908 still holds the highest rank in number of students.

The enrollments and classification of students, wherever they were classified, are given below of a few significant years. Some things of interest may be discovered in studying increases and decreases of attendance during the long years Blinn Memorial College existed.

## 1883-1884

Theological Course.....	3
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## 1893-1894

Normal Course.....	19
Theological Course.....	4
Unclassified .....	16
Commercial Course.....	14
Music Course.....	29
Preparatory Course.....	41
Net total in all classes.....	99

## 1903-1904

Academic Course.....	6
Normal Course.....	30
Theological Course.....	9
Commercial Course.....	32
Preparatory Course.....	50
Music Course.....	19

Net total of all classes.....130

## 1907-1908

Academic Course.....	31
Normal Course.....	62
Commercial Course.....	49
Stenographic Course.....	13
Typewriting Course.....	33
Theological Course.....	8
Preparatory Course.....	74
Music Course.....	25

Net enrollment in all classes.....239

## 1913-1914

Commercial Course.....	35
Academic Course.....	78
Typewriting Course.....	12
Preparatory Course.....	28
Stenographic Course.....	7
Theological Course.....	7
Music Course.....	19
Voice .....	9
Summer Normal .....	70

Net enrollment in all classes.....226

Net enrollment regular term.....156

## 1923-1924

Regular Term .....	119
Summer Term .....	43
Grand Total .....	162

## 1933-1934

Regular Term .....	116
Summer Term .....	56
Grand Total .....	172

## MORE TEACHERS

Arthur Niebuhr, B. A., was reared on a farm near Brenham. He attended the city public schools until he had completed the seventh grade. Then, for five years he worked on the farm.<sup>27</sup> In 1899 he entered Blinn College, re-entering after Christmas the following year. After teaching school one year, he again attended Blinn from 1902 to 1903, completing the Normal course. He was elected valedictorian of his class, and because of having the highest average, he received the scholarship to the University of Texas, which he entered the next fall. The following year he was elected instructor in Mathematics in Blinn College. From 1906 to 1908 he was granted a leave of absence to complete the work for his B. A. degree.

Mr. Niebuhr was a high-type Christian character. He was an active worker in the church, being a member of the official board. He was always well-liked by students of Blinn, where he spent twenty-two of the best years of his life creditably. He resigned in 1926 to accept the principalship of the Brenham High School. In 1930 he was elected superintendent of the Bellville schools, which position he still holds.

Mrs. Emma Fisher Tarrant, B. Lit., was elected a member of the faculty during the session of 1903 to 1904. According to the president's report to the Annual Conference, her work was entirely satisfactory.

Mr. G. W. Kopp, M. Accts., was elected a member of the faculty in 1905. A part of his life's story we quote from the **Blinn College Monthly**, June, 1903:

"G. W. Kopp, of Brenham, is a minister's son, but he spent his youth on a ranch in Mason County. He attended Blinn at the age of 13, and attended four sessions. Then he obtained a teacher's certificate and taught school five years. During the summer of 1901 he completed the commercial course in the Massey Business College, and the summer following was employed as teacher in this college. Last Sep-

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27. *The Blinn College Monthly*, June, 1903, p. 3.



tember he re-entered Blinn and completed the Normal course. Mr. Kopp has charge of the Commercial department in the Chappell Hill Female College, where he will begin work next September."

Mr. Kopp was a man of unusual energy. Whenever he entered the classroom, things began to move. His students always were the best advertisement for his department, for his work was efficient and thorough. Even today hundreds of the best positions in the cities and towns of Texas and other states are being held by his students. It is not too much to say that the Commercial and Stenographic Department of Blinn College saw its best days when G. W. Kopp was at the head of it. In the session of 1911 to 1912 there were 56 students enrolled in the Stenographic and Commercial courses.

Mr. Kopp was an active church worker, serving on various boards and in the Sunday School. He resigned in 1927, thus serving twenty-two years, to accept work in the Massey Business College in Houston.

D. H. Fischer was born and reared on a farm in Gillespie County, Texas. Here he received his elementary education, and here he worked until he was a mature young man. In 1898 he entered Blinn Memorial College and registered for work in the Normal courses, which he completed in 1900. Having been graduated from this work, he taught school at Wesley and Industry, Texas. Later he entered the Southwest Texas State Normal at San Marcos, from which he graduated. In 1906 he was elected teacher of the preparatory courses in Blinn Memorial College. When Professor John E. Stullken resigned in 1909, Mr. Fischer was appointed teacher of the sciences.

While connected with Blinn Mr. Fischer always directed one or more musical organizations, such as the Arion, the band, and an orchestra. Besides this, he also directed a choir in the German M. E. Church, now the Fourth Street Church, of which he was a very active member, serving on official boards and as Sunday School superintendent.

From 1918 to 1919 he received a leave of absence to complete the work on his B. A. degree at Central Wesleyan

College, Warrenton, Missouri. The next year we find him back on the Blinn faculty teaching science. In 1925 he resigned to accept a position on the faculty of the Sam Houston State Teachers College, where he is still actively employed.

W. S. Brandenberger, of Mason County, graduated from Blinn Memorial College in 1905. The following fall he entered the University of Texas, continuing his work there through his sophomore year. In 1907 he was elected a member of the Blinn faculty. The first year he taught in the preparatory department, and the second year he was given the history classes. He re-entered the University of Texas in 1907 to complete his work on his B. A. degree. After graduating from the University, he took up work in the Waco public schools. Later he was with the State Department of Education for a number of years. At present Mr. Brandenberger is principal of the James Hogg Junior High School of Houston.

### ASSISTANT TEACHERS

Because classes were large during the Pluenneke administration, assistant teachers were needed in some of the departments. These assistant teachers were generally taken from among the best students in the senior classes.

In the Bookkeeping Department, for instance, Daniel Brandenberger was assistant from 1906-1907, Henry Homburg from 1907-1908, and Felix Buchholz from 1908-1909.

The music classes had a large enrollment in the days when Mrs. Ida Harris was at the head of the department, the enrollment in 1907-1908 being 25. Here Miss Elsie Stullken assisted from 1906-1909.

Alwin W. Speckels taught arithmetic and civics in 1906-1907, and at the same time carried his own courses.

### THE LOCATION QUESTION

A new modern building was very much needed. With the erection of that building, the school would move out into a new era. Several questions were raised in connection with this undertaking. First of all, more ground was

needed for the campus, there being only two acres at the disposal of the school so far. Furthermore, how much aid would Brenham give the school; or was there perhaps another town that would offer more than Brenham and, at the same time, be a better location for the school? These questions were agitated by the public several years before formal cognizance was given them by the school authorities.

In 1900, it seems, committees were appointed by the conference to get reports from Brenham, Waco, and Seguin as to offers they could make with regard to having the school located at these places. Waco was the only one to make an offer at that time, but it was not considered.<sup>28</sup> In 1904 representatives of Seguin appeared before the Board of Trustees of Blinn Memorial College, offering 10 acres of land in Seguin, \$18,000 for the erection of buildings, and free water and electric light for ten years.<sup>29</sup> The offer was very enticing and aroused much interest and enthusiasm, especially among the people of West Texas.

Brenham was rather slow, it seems, in getting an offer ready, thinking perhaps that it would take more to move the school to another place than to keep it here. A committee, representing the Commercial Club of Brenham, appeared before the board, June, 1905, and argued for the retention of Blinn at Brenham, offering, at the same time, to give the school six acres of land adjoining the old campus and \$2,000 in cash toward the new building.

The question of the location of Blinn was discussed by ministers and laymen of the conference. Numerous articles appeared in the **Texas Stern**, 1903, 1904, and 1905, as well as in the local papers of Brenham and Seguin, arguing as to why the school should be in the one place rather than in the other. Waco never became very enthusiastic about the question. The Annual Conference, convened at Seguin, November, 1905, heard the arguments of the representatives of both cities and debated the question on the conference floor. It finally went into exec-

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28. E. W. Blinn in the **Texas Stern**, Nov., 1904, p. 4.

29. **Texas Stern**, July, 1905, p. 4.

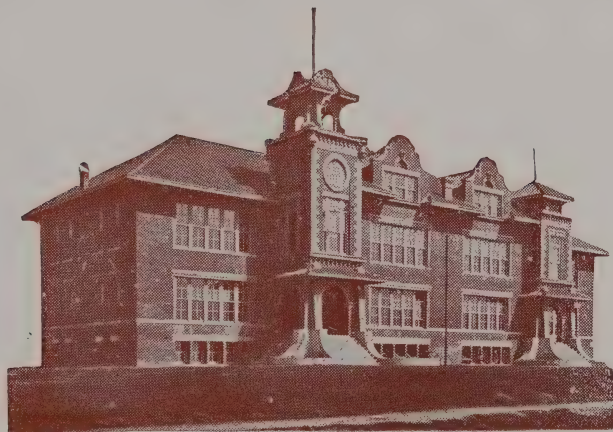
utive session to vote between Seguin and Brenham. Only ministers could vote, a rather undemocratic arrangement in the Methodist Discipline at that time. The vote was twenty to fifteen in favor of Brenham.

Was this decision a mistake? From one point of view it seemingly was. First of all, Brenham is a strong Lutheran center, while Methodism always has been in the minority in that place. Seguin, on the other hand, has one of the largest Methodist congregations in the Southern Conference, and, in addition to that, the Methodist Church, South, has a fair representation there. Again, the offer Seguin made was by far more liberal than the one made by Brenham. It would have made up for the loss of property in Brenham, had the school been moved, for up to that time, the property valuation of Blinn College was estimated at \$16,000.

However, it can be said that there was considerable loyalty to the school among the people of Brenham and Washington County. When the school first started, there could not have been any enthusiasm, because of the very modest beginning, which was hardly noticeable. When the Reverend Mr. Blinn made his liberal contributions, the citizens of Brenham responded with a gift of \$3,800, which, however, fell short by \$200 of the amount asked by Mr. Blinn. Other donations were made by the city by the time the question of moving the school was raised. The city's gift to Blinn when the Main Building was erected was estimated at \$10,000. In later years some of the citizens contributed rather continuously and liberally, which was much appreciated by the school authorities. Of the enrollment of the school Brenham and Washington County have always furnished a large per cent of the student body. Furthermore, Brenham is a better school center than Seguin, there being no competition, except A. and M. College, within a radius of seventy miles. And, finally, to conclude that the Southern German Conference would have continued to support Blinn better had it been located at Seguin, is rather far-fetched.







THE MAIN BUILDING

## THE MAIN BUILDING

As soon as the question of location was settled, the board moved forward with the erection of the new building. The Ex-students' Association had already pledged and largely collected \$3,000 toward the building project. With the addition of that sum, about \$16,000 was on hand in the building fund. The Reverend W. A. Moers, who was perhaps one of the best collectors German Methodism in Texas ever produced, was appointed by the conference to gather the rest of the funds. (It might be said here, however, that W. A. Moers did not make many friends because of his ability to collect money).

In the meantime Dr. Pluenneke had been in correspondence with Mr. Andrew Carnegie about some aid in the undertaking. Mr. Carnegie finally agreed to donate \$13,000 to the building, provided the public would add \$13,000 to the endowment fund and make up all of the rest needed for the building. This liberal offer was quite an inducement for the friends of the institution to put forth every effort to meet the challenge of Mr. Carnegie. Under the leadership of Rev. Moers all the necessary funds were either on hand or guaranteed in a few months.

Everything being ready now, the board asked for bids by architects and contractors. The plan of the Architect C. H. Page, of Austin, was accepted, and the contract was given to C. W. Raper, who proposed to erect the building at a cost of \$28,750. This contract was modified somewhat later on as the roofing and other specifications were changed.

It having been decided to put the new building where the old ones were standing, a good deal of moving of buildings had to be done. On March 19, excavation for the basement was begun, and on June 5, 1906, the corner stone was laid, the Reverend C. Urbantke, President Emeritus, conducting the exercises. Work on the building progressed rapidly, so that the dedication of the new structure could be set for November of that year, with all debts paid or

funds guaranteed. The total value of the school property and the endowment fund was now placed at \$100,000.<sup>30</sup>

Thus the school experienced its greatest forward movement during the Pluenneke administration. The physical property was never in a better condition, the old buildings having been entirely renovated along with the erection of the Main Building. The attendance was encouraging, the endowment fund had been materially strengthened, the enlarged campus with its new building appeared well to the passers-by, and hundreds of dollars worth of equipment had been installed. Undoubtedly, the school passed its zenith during these years.

Here, then, was a real need and it was comparatively easy to provide for it. Fortunately, the project was undertaken when the school was in a prosperous condition and in the process of rapid development. The future at that time looked hopeful. But, after all, buildings and equipments are mere incidentals or aids, but students and teachers constitute the real school. Great teachers are, at least ought to be, the best drawing card for any institution. In the Middle Ages schools which had particularly famous teachers attracted students from many parts of Europe. Pierre Abelard (1070-1148) withdrew from civilization for a while, but when his pupils found out his hiding place, they came to him in such numbers that he felt constraint to resume his instructions. Among the faculty members of Blinn Memorial College of the early days were men who made a deep impression on the minds of the masses of the Southern German Conference. They were men to whom the people looked for spiritual as well as intellectual guidance. It may have been easier then to be a leader; nevertheless, the names of Urbantke, Pluenneke, Stullken, and Neu had a great weight with the people in their decisions on issues of that day and time.

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30. *Offizielle Verhandlungen und Berichte Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz*, 1906, p. 79.

## CHAPTER V.

J. L. NEU ADMINISTRATION  
(1909-1924)

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HIS LIFE AND SERVICE

In 1909 Dr. Pluenneke found it necessary that he be relieved of all executive duties. Professor J. L. Neu, who was attending the University of Texas at the time, was elected president of Blinn. Being familiar with every detail of the development of the school and being an able educator, he was well prepared to step right into the work of the presidency.

After graduating from the Brenham High School, Mr. Neu attended the University for several years. In 1895 he entered Blinn to prepare himself for the ministry, but the following year he was appointed instructor in the preparatory classes. He was soon given the English and history classes; but in course of time he taught only English, in which he was extraordinary. In 1908-1909 he was granted a leave of absence to complete the work on his B. A. degree in the University of Texas, from which he was graduated with honors the following June.

Mr. Neu made a reputation in Blinn as instructor in English. He was thorough in his work, and this thoroughness was expected of his students. It was said that any student who passed Professor Neu's classes with a fairly good grade, would have no trouble in passing English in Texas colleges and universities.

Professor Neu was elected president at a time when the school was at its best. There was a spirit of optimism everywhere. From 1909, when he became president, until 1914, the enrollment fluctuated between 202 and 156. The Academic Department had 99 enrolled in 1912-1913, but the Preparatory Department showed a constant decrease. But from 1914 on, all classes were slowly decreasing in size, some faster than others. Blinn was now competing

with the grammar schools and high schools of Texas, with the disadvantage of having to charge tuition.

Dr. Pluenncke resigned as instructor in Theology and History, 1916, to accept the pastorate of the Seguin congregation. He had been advocating the discontinuance of the theological courses for some time, arguing the incongruity of teaching theology in a school of academy rank. Hence, in the course of a year or two after this, only Bible courses were offered. Students preparing for the ministry had to go elsewhere to get their preparation. Most of the laymen and some ministers of the conference did not understand that this was the sensible thing to do, but felt that the school had "fallen from grace"; therefore, a great deal of interest in the school was lost right here.

What could save the school? The financial conditions became more alarming as time passed. This really had its beginning with the building of the girls dormitory, which left a debt of \$15,000 and which drew \$900 interest out of the maintenance funds of the school each year. The decrease in the enrollment, due to prevailing conditions, made matters worse. The people and the board were seeking a cause for this trouble. The executive officer of any institution has, of course, a great responsibility and, at the same time, makes a convenient scape goat. J. L. Neu became such a scape goat. The idea that the student body was decreasing because J. L. Neu was unpopular, began to spread among the people, and some of the board and faculty members began to believe it. But those trustees, friends of the school, and faculty members, still living today, will perhaps have been convinced by this time that the cause for Blinn's trouble lay much deeper than that.

No one ever worked harder for Blinn than did President Neu. The board being highly conservative in making appropriations, no office force, except for special work, was provided for the president. He conducted all his correspondence, looked after the general executive and administrative duties, and taught as many as six, never less than five, classes a day. In his executive duties he was very democratic. Nothing was done except by action of the faculty, which met regularly each month. But in spite of all his duties as president of the school, he hardly ever







GIRLS' DORMITORY

missed a session of the official board of the church of which he was secretary for years, and, being local preacher, he delivered many sermons. He was also much in demand as speaker at public gatherings.

Professor Neu could perhaps not make himself popular in the sense the people generally think of that term; nevertheless, in purity of character and nobleness of purpose he was excelled by no one. No serious-minded student ever stayed away from Blinn because Neu was president. Those who knew him most intimately, cherished him most highly.

But so it was. In 1924 the board decided to elect some one else president of the school. The office of dean was created, and Mr. Neu was elected to it. He saw through it all and handed in his resignation the next day. He had served the school faithfully and efficiently for over twenty-five years. That summer he moved to Austin, where he entered the University of Texas, doing work toward his M. A. degree. Since then he has received his Master's degree and has done considerable work toward his Doctorate. He is now full-time instructor in the English Department of the University of Texas, and is the co-author of a high school English textbook.<sup>31</sup>

## DORMITORIES

To provide lodging and meals for the students has always been one of the difficult tasks of schools drawing some of their students from beyond their immediate community. When the Girls' Dormitory was built in 1913, this phase of the school, as far as equipment was concerned, also was at its best. It is, therefore, in place here to trace the history of the development of the boarding house and dormitory facilities of Blinn Memorial College.

The first three years, as stated above, the Reverend and Mrs. C. Urbantke boarded the students in their own home. But in 1886 an annex was built to the Mission Institute at a cost of \$425, to serve as a dormitory for

31. The book is entitled **The Highway to English**, by Clark, Starnes, Neu and Stigler. It has been adopted as state textbook by Texas and several other states.

students. It seems that a boarding club was organized among the students that year. The cost of room and board was quoted at that time at \$6 to \$7 a month.<sup>32</sup>

By 1889, however, the faculty began to supervise the appointment of stewards for the boarding department, and students were charged \$1.75 a week for board and room, whereas in private homes rates were about \$10 a month. The following persons served as stewards of the dining department of Blinn: the Reverend and Mrs. Wm. Buehrer, 1889-1890; the Reverend and Mrs. Reetz, 1890-1893; Mr. L. Hoting, 1893-1896; Mr. Henry Fischer, 1896-1899; the Reverend and Mrs. G. Dosdall, 1899-1901; Professor and Mrs. John E. Stullken, 1901-1905; the Reverend and Mrs. John Kleinknecht, 1905-1909; Mr. Peter Schreiner and Family, 1909-1913; Mr. and Mrs. Seifert, 1913-1916; Mr. and Mrs. Wendler, 1916-1918.

Up to 1913 the young ladies found room and board in private homes, but with the erection of the Girls' Dormitory, they could no longer stay in private homes unless they had relatives living in Brenham. From that year on, also, there was a common dining hall kept for both young men and women, and a matron was appointed to supervise the dining hall. The position of steward receded in importance, cooks being now employed who had to take orders from the matron. The following served as matrons of the dormitory: Mrs. G. W. Kopp, Mrs. H. L. Weber, Mrs. George Neu, and Miss Nellie Brunow.

Right here a word needs to be said about two of the former matrons connected with the Girls' Dormitory. The first one is Miss Nellie Brunow, who served long and faithfully as matron and superintendent of the boarding department. Her family was indirectly connected with the school from its very beginning. Her father, the Reverend J. J. Brunow, was an enthusiastic advocate of a conference school a decade before the beginning of Blinn, and his sudden death removed a great friend of education. When Blinn opened her doors to young women, Mrs. J. J. Brunow opened her home to the girl students of Blinn. Her home was just across the street from the college campus

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32. Catalogue Mission Institute, 1887, p. 6.

and was for many years known as the "Brunow House." Miss Nellie Brunow took charge of the Blinn Girls' Dormitory in 1921, serving as matron and superintendent of the dining department till 1933. She was very conscientious and efficient in her work, and was always well liked by the young women. Through her frugality and economy she saved the school many a dollar.

Another figure long connected with the Girls' Dormitory was Mrs. George Neu. She took complete charge of affairs from 1916 to 1921. For a few years after this she and her husband lived in their own home on Peabody Street, during which time she had the misfortune of losing her life's companion. In 1929 Blinn needed a Dean of Women. Mrs. Neu was appointed and she served efficiently in that capacity till 1933. From that year on she served as superintendent of the boarding department.

When the junior college was organized in 1927, the policy of appointing a dean of women was introduced. Miss Alice Mae Schneider, now Mrs. H. A. Brooks, was the first one to be appointed to that office, 1927-1928, when she was a student in the junior college here. The next year Miss Pauline Ebel, also a student, supervised the dormitory. From 1929 to 1933, as stated above, Mrs. George Neu was Dean of Women. She was succeeded by Mrs. H. A. Brooks.

The Girls' Dormitory has always been well regulated, and conditions conducive to the happiness of young ladies prevailed. In the years past certain regulations as to the wearing of uniforms by young women was thought to be helpful, especially for girls with moderate means; but the students complied with the rule rather reluctantly, and the expense-saving feature was not what had been expected; hence the rule was set aside after a few years' trial.

Not so satisfactory were the conditions in the Boys' Dormitories. Arrangements were such that a faculty member with a family could not live in the men's building; hence supervision was only fairly good. A system of "visitations" by faculty members was carried out consistently for many years; and as long as most of Blinn's students came from the well-disciplined farm homes of Texas, there



was little trouble in keeping order among the young men in the dormitories.

It might be said here that the school authorities evidently made a mistake when they ordered the building of the Girls' Dormitory. Only a few years had passed since they had collected large funds for the Main Building. The people of the conference, therefore, entered into the campaign with little enthusiasm. Worst of all, it was just on the eve of a great change of conditions educationally. The time for academies, except for a few military institutions, was about past, and the high schools drew practically all students who were preparing for entrance into the higher institutions of learning.

Furthermore, just about the time the dormitory was built, automobiles came into use and transportation was completely revolutionized. Formerly people who lived ten to fifteen miles from the school had to put their children in the dormitories, if they wanted to send them to school at all. Now they began to go back and forth every day within a radius of twenty-five miles of Brenham.

When the plan to build the dormitory was accepted, it called for a cost of \$20,000, but by the time the building was completed and equipped, the cost amounted to \$30,000. And although the citizens of Brenham contributed \$6,000 toward the building fund, a debt of \$15,000 remained, as stated above. From here on deficits at the end of a school session were rather regular, until twenty years later there was a rather large debt that endangered the continuance of the school.

The new dormitory afforded many conveniences. It is doubtful whether there is another small college in Texas that can boast of a better building for young women. However, the idea of increasing the attendance by offering the young women up-to-date living quarters failed to materialize. For, although there was room for fifty-two, hardly ever have over thirty young women lived in the building at one time.

Could the authorities of Blinn have seen ahead and have been content with housing the young women in private homes, the school would undoubtedly have remained

on a stronger financial basis all along. For it was not only interest on the unpaid debts but the upkeep and the overhead that the dormitory required. In short, it might be said that the Girls' Dormitory, in the long run, proved to be rather a liability than an asset.

## ENDOWMENT FUND

During President Neu's administration the endowment fund was increased to its highest point. We shall, therefore, endeavor to give briefly the history of its accumulation.

Having become deeply interested at an Annual Conference at Seguin in 1882, after hearing a discussion of the conference's need of a school for the training of young men for the ministry, a certain Ludwig Jauer of the community offered 70 acres of land at Seguin for such a purpose, provided that a school of a true Christian character were built on the land. When that plan could not be carried out, he provided in his will that the land be sold and the sum realized from it (\$800.00) be set aside as an endowment fund for the school. Here, then, we have the beginning of that fund.<sup>33</sup>

A resolution was passed at a session of the conference, 1884, that all jubilee gifts and donations be used exclusively for the endowment fund of the school. In 1885 over \$2,000 were reported in the fund. Small and large sums were contributed. Some people deeded land to the school. For instance, the records show, 1885, that Fr. Blumberg gave 35 acres, the Reverend Henry Diener, 640 acres, and a Mr. Zander, 35 acres. Some years there was a surplus in the annual budget of the school, and this was generally added to the endowment fund. At times money was taken out of this fund to help pay running expenses. As early as 1891, \$2,000 were used for building purposes. This was justified, it seems, by the fact that a donation of \$3,000 by Mrs. C. Blinn to a fund for a woman's hall, had been added to the endowment fund.

When the Reverend C. Blinn made his gift, he called

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33. Jubilaeums—Ausgabe Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz, 1922, p. 30.

on the citizens of Brenham for a considerable sum for the maintenance fund, to which they responded with a gift of \$3,800. Later on, when Mr. Carnegie gave the school \$13,000 toward the cost of the main building, he asked that an equal sum be added to the endowment fund, as stated previously. Then, when the Methodist Church undertook her great Centenary drive soon after the War, the Southern Conference included Blinn in her financial campaign, setting the goal at \$50,000. This goal however was not reached. Nevertheless, the fund was greatly increased. Such a financial drive had been endorsed by the Lay Conference of 1919.<sup>34</sup> All told, the fund finally amounted to approximately \$85,000. A good deal of this, of course, was in real estate and other securities that depreciated in value in course of time.

Hundreds of donors had a part in the accumulation of this fund. Some of it represented great sacrifices. As long as things went their normal course, the endowment fund proved the real financial backbone of the school, for much of it was well invested most of the time. From its general nature and the purpose it served, it would be more correctly called a maintenance fund.

### THE REVEREND W. A. MOERS

Not much can be said about the financial affairs of the school without being reminded of the Reverend W. A. Moers, who carried the burden of practically all the later financial campaigns; and, after the Reverend Wm. Pfaeffle, was the moving power in Blinn's financial program.

W. A. Moers was born in Germany, where he attended the Realschule and later a business-training school. Emigrating to America, he settled in Pittsburg, where he entered the Iron City College. In 1880 he came to Houston, Texas. He taught school for a few years, until he was converted in a Methodist meeting. Being a well-prepared man, he was given local preacher's license and soon entered the ranks of the active ministers in the conference.<sup>35</sup>

34. *Beschluesse Der Laienwahl Konferenz*, Conference Minutes, 1919.

35. *Jubilaeums—Ausgabe Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz*, 1922, p. 94.

Moers was a man of great determination and energy. His motto was, "Rather wear out than rust out." He served as district superintendent, was sent to the General Conference, and served some of the leading charges in the Southern Conference. For several years he was treasurer and superintendent of buildings and grounds of the school. He died in his old home community in Hanover, Germany, while visiting there in 1930.

Other financial agents of the school who helped gather funds for various purposes were John Streit, John Hierholzer, and A. A. Leifeste.

## TEACHERS

The faculty of Blinn Memorial College was known for its stability. The "regulars" on the faculty served all the way from twelve to twenty-six years. Yet, in the Music and Athletics Departments, the changes were more frequent. During the administration of Professor Neu a number of changes on the faculty were made.

Miss Emily O'Neal Harris, daughter of Mrs. Ida Harris, was assistant instructor in music under her mother, and in 1909 was elected to the place from which her mother had resigned. She served to the satisfaction of the school authorities till 1913.

Miss Lili Edith Nagler, daughter of Dr. Nagler, a former editor of the well-known **Haus und Herd**, of Cincinnati, Ohio, succeeded Miss Harris in 1913 and served one year.

In 1913, when Professor G. F. Urbantke resigned, I was elected on the faculty as instructor in the preparatory branches.

Since I was born in a west Texas frontier community, my elementary education was very poor. But with the aid of night school and some private instructions, I finally succeeded in entering the Sam Houston Normal Institute at Huntsville, 1900, from which I graduated in 1905. In the meantime I taught school a few years before graduating. In the fall of 1905 I entered the University of Texas, staying there also for the summer term the next year. I



continued teaching from that year on, doing all of my studying during summer terms in the State and in Baylor University, succeeding thus to obtain both the B. A. and M. A. degrees.

This fall (1934) I shall begin my twentieth year of teaching in Blinn. From 1920 on I have had charge of the history classes.

Miss Lillian Ludwick, now Mrs. P. J. Lemm of Brenham, had charge of the music classes from 1914 till 1916.

Mrs. B. F. Teague taught Music and Expression in Blinn with considerable success, 1916 till 1918.

Following Mrs. B. F. Teague came Mrs. Kate Estes McAdam, who had been conducting private classes in piano and voice for years. She did faithful and efficient work on the Blinn faculty from 1918 till 1932.

J. W. McCord was Athletic Director and Instructor in English and the preparatory branches, 1916 till 1917.

L. H. Schmidt was a student in Blinn in 1916-1917, when he was called to the Colors. After having received training in Camp Travis for a year with the Signal Corps in the heavy artillery, he went to France with the Ninetieth Division. After the Armistice, he was assigned to the Army of Occupation at Colbenz, Germany. Having been somewhat of an outstanding athlete in Blinn as well as in the Army of Occupation, he was appointed Athletic Director by President J. L. Neu in 1919. Mr. Schmidt completed his work in the Commercial Department at the same time that he coached athletics that year.

In 1918 Miss Angela Niebuhr became a member of the faculty. For a number of years she was instructor in history and German, but in course of time she was given charge of the English classes.

Miss Niebuhr was a graduate of Blinn Memorial College, also graduating a few years later from the Southwest Texas State Normal at San Marcos. She taught in the public schools a few years, and then entered the University of Texas from which she received her B. A. degree in 1918. She continued her studies in the University, completing all requirements for her M. A. degree except the work on her thesis.



Miss Niebuhr was one of Blinn's strong teachers. She was thorough in her own work and expected the same thoroughness of her students. The English professors of the State University had a high regard for Miss Niebuhr's ability to teach English. In school and church her influence was for all that is highest and best. She was active in the classroom until a few days before her untimely death, which ended her useful life May 3, 1932.

Miss Flora Moreland taught stenography and type-writing in the Commercial Department of Blinn Memorial College, 1920-1921, to the satisfaction of all concerned. After leaving Brenham, she continued her studies in the University of Texas.

A. S. Hendon, of Tennessee, was instructor in stenography and typewriting, 1921 to 1923.

### ASSISTANT TEACHERS

Assistant teachers were employed during the early years of the Neu administration.

Paul Streit assisted in the preparatory branches, and Miss Pearl Pluenneke, daughter of Dr. John Pluenneke, in music, 1910-1911.

Miss Juanita Niederauer, now Mrs. C. C. Albers, and Mrs. D. C. Becker assisted as music instructors for a few years under Mrs. McAdam.

### MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

**Affiliation.** President Neu saw to it that students would receive credit in the State University for work done in Blinn. Practically all courses of high school rank were accredited with the State Department of Education, so that by 1924 the school had twenty-two accredited units.

**Patriotism.** The administration of the school's affairs during the World War called for a great deal of tact. President Neu, however, measured up to this difficult task. In a report to the Annual Conference, 1919, the trustees said in part, "We should thank God for this man (Neu) who, during these difficult times, has steered the ship of

the school clear of cliffs and rocks, so that the school has suffered no harm; yes, more than that, has gained in influence." During the year 1917-1918 the students purchased a Liberty Bond of \$50. Teachers and students always took active part in every Red Cross and Liberty Bond drive. Many of Blinn's boys answered the call to the colors and some of them made the "supreme sacrifice."

**Home-Coming.** During 1923 occurred the fortieth anniversary of the founding of Blinn Memorial College. It was thought that a home-coming of the former students of the college, who were now counted by the thousands, would be enjoyed by many of them and that it might do the college some good. A day was set aside, therefore, during commencement time for this occasion and a varied and interesting program arranged at which a number of prominent Blinn ex-students delivered addresses. The Brenham Chamber of Commerce gave a barbecue, at which hundreds of guests were fed.

The results of this gathering were not what had been hoped. The wave of enthusiasm created in a way was counteracted by a rather gloomy report made by the board of trustees during the commencement, and, the board failing to present a forward-looking, constructive program, no material aid for the school was secured and the guests went home with rather unpleasant forebodings for their Alma Mater.

**Lyceum.** Throughout almost the entire history of Blinn Memorial College attention was given to the cultivation of the fine arts. The school's own organizations contributed a great deal in the way of chorus singing and instrumental music; but the school authorities saw to it that the students had the benefit also of the very best in platform speakers and musical organizations that the institution could afford. Every year, therefore, during a part of the Pluenneke administration and the entire time of the Neu administration, annual Lyceum courses were arranged for. In this way the students became acquainted with some of America's best speakers and readers as well as concert companies and entertainers. An excerpt from a report on lyceum programs reads thus:

" . . . . In our humble opinion that entertainment ranks very high among its kind, and deserves all the words of praise with which it is received everywhere. Mr. Rowand is not only a very pleasing and polished orator, but the subject matter of his oratory is chaste, inspiring, and ennobling. . . . An entertainment of such a nature cannot fail to inspire and uplift all, who have the privilege to enjoy it.

"The last number unfortunately had to be postponed on account of the illness of Mr. Beauchamp. The date will be announced later."<sup>36</sup>

**Nearing the Crisis.** It was always hoped that there would soon come a great revival of interest in the school. The World War and hard times had served as an explanation for the decrease in the enrollment, but when times began to be better and the situation in the school did not improve, people became restless and felt that the school must be saved from its final doom in some way other than had been tried so far. Recourse was, therefore, taken to a change in presidents.

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36. *Bulletin of Blinn Memorial College*, March, 1914, p. 19.

## CHAPTER VI.

B. E. BREIHAN ADMINISTRATION  
(1924-1927)

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HIS LIFE AND SERVICE

The board was diligently and earnestly seeking a way to improve the conditions of the school. It was thought that a change in the administration might be helpful. The presidency was offered to G. F. Urbantke, who declined. The board next turned to the Reverend B. E. Breihan, its secretary, who accepted the offer after some deliberation.

As to a brief sketch of his life, we quote from the **Golden Jubilee Edition** of the Southern German Conference: "B. E. Breihan was born November 17, 1881, at Industry, Texas. He is the son of a prominent family, who later moved to Bartlett, Texas, where the son had the opportunity of a good elementary education. Under the influence of the church, he soon felt the call to the ministry. He entered Blinn Memorial College, later graduating from Wallace College with the Ph. B. degree. He joined the Southern German Conference in 1904 and served Schertz and Wetmore, Bastrop and Paige, Waco, New Orleans, and San Antonio."

B. E. Breihan served on the San Antonio District six years and was twice delegate to the General Conference. He was well prepared in his field of work. He had, however, little or nothing in his experience and training to prepare him for the position of president of an educational institution. The new work was an experiment. But errors like this have been made frequently by boards of church schools in choosing administrators. It does not necessarily follow that a man will be successful as a school president because he is a good pulpit orator and pastor. Breihan worked diligently, but the affairs of the school kept slipping away from his hands. Prevailing conditions were against him. Three of the teachers of the "old guard" resigned during his administration after having

been on the faculty from eighteen to twenty-two years. This gave the situation the appearance of a sinking ship.

Mr. Breihan served three years as president. In 1927 he resigned as such and was elected head of the Bible and Language Department of the Junior College for 1927-1928.

He and his family went through some dark days that year, at the end of which they moved to Kerrville, Texas, hoping to improve Mrs. Breihan's health. But there she has now been bed-ridden for five long years. In spite of the Gethsemane through which this noble family has been going these last years, there is much sunshine in the home, and they are bringing up four fine children who, we feel, will be an honor to their parents and a credit to any community in which they may happen to live.

## TEACHERS

The faculty shake-up made it necessary to look around for new instructors. The board entrusted this task to the Executive Committee and President Breihan. Soon several applicants were before this committee.

T. M. Sullivan, B. S. C., of Tennessee, finished the unexpired term of G. W. Kopp, 1926-1927.

C. A. Ridge, M. A., who came to Blinn from the Southern Methodist University, was elected instructor of the sciences, 1925 to 1926.

To succeed Mr. Ridge, Thomas Perrin, M. A., of Georgetown, and graduate of Southwestern University, 1926, was elected. He had been an outstanding football player on the University team, and his work in science had ranked high. He served creditably on the Blinn faculty, organizing the chemistry and physics classes in 1927, when the junior college was called into being. In 1930 he went to the University of Texas, working on his Ph. D. degree, which he received in 1933.

Sam A. D. Leifeste, B. A., was elected June, 1926, to succeed Mr. Arthur Niebuhr as instructor of mathematics. He served one year.

Miss Georgia Broughton was employed to teach typewriting and bookkeeping, 1925 till 1927.



## EVANGELINE COLLEGE

A small mission school was supported by the M. E. Church in Louisiana for some years. However, as time went on, it got to where the school could not maintain itself any longer, and it was proposed to merge it with Blinn Memorial College. As to a brief sketch of the history of the school, we quote from a report made by Dr. Philip Deschner to the Annual Conference, 1926:

“Evangeline College was a school located at Basile, Louisiana, for the purpose of educating the French Acadians in the ‘Evangeline country.’ It was a Gulf Conference institution. The conference could not finance the school and for that reason appealed to the Wichita Area, the Board of Education, the Woman’s Home Missionary Society, and the Church-at-Large for aid. There was a great opportunity for a church school in that section, and some help was received from various sources, enabling the school to work. In 1905 the school building at Basile burned down. Plans were made for rebuilding on a much larger scale. A campaign was made for endowment and building funds and declared a great success. The school was moved from Basile to Apelousas, Louisiana. This was thought to be a better location, and the city, through some club, offered the school a large tract of land and considerable money. For one year classes were taught in a temporary building at Apelousas.”

When the Gulf Conference was merged with the Southern German and the Swedish Mission Conference, into the Southern Conference, it was evident that this new conference would not support more than one educational institution. Consequently a move to merge Evangeline College with Blinn was started. The initiative was taken by the Evangeline Board, which passed a resolution to that effect. Bishop Waldorf, of the Kansas Area, acted as intermediary, and a similar resolution was passed by the Board of Blinn Memorial College, subject to the approval

of the Annual Conference, which was also done in due time.

The authorities of Blinn were assured that this merging of the two institutions would not place any financial obligations on Blinn. An appraisal of the assets of Evangeline College, made by its own committee, placed the total assets of the school at over \$8,000. This included over \$7,000 in pledges, of which finally only \$375 were collected by Dr. C. W. Rodgers, who was employed at a salary of \$1,800 a year. The value of the books, chemicals, and laboratory apparatus amounted to about \$500, the transportation of which cost \$128.00.<sup>37</sup> After all the "merging" was completed, Blinn Memorial College had to add about \$1,000 to her already large debt.

### THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A body of men guiding the affairs of an institution of any kind may be judged by the growth and development of that institution and by the conditions under which that board has to work—the type of people who support the institution, the resources, the competition, etc.

The board of Blinn Memorial College had to build from the bottom up. There was practically nothing to begin with except the proverbial Mark Hopkins at one end of a log and a student at the other end, when the educational project of the Southern German Conference was begun.

The board built comparatively well. At the beginning of her educational endeavor, the conference counted a little over 1200 members, which would make about one strong congregation. Furthermore, with but few exceptions, the members of this small mission conference were poor people. No one could even dream of a university or even a fairly good college, unless some philanthropist would endow it heavily.

The average member of the board—there were 79 during the 51 years the school existed—was a good type of citizen, generally somewhat conservative, believing in the pay-as-you-go idea. They were trustworthy men, for they

37. *Verhandlungen Der Suedlich Deutschen Konferenz*, 1926, pp. 154-156.

were scrupulously honest. Funds were handled with the utmost care. All of this kept them from venturing out on a large plan in the early years.

Their wisdom in the management of the affairs of the school was not questioned, except perhaps in the last two decades when it became necessary for the institution to enter into a different field of service to justify its continuance, or when the day of academies had largely passed. It was difficult, not only for most of the board members, but for the people as a whole, to understand the new situation.

President J. L. Neu had always advised against the idea of launching out on a junior college program, unless the maintenance fund were at least doubled. Although his advice was finally not followed, its wisdom nevertheless was demonstrated in the course of a few years. The situation with which the board had to deal was not as simple as it was in the beginning of the school. To close the institution now meant a great sacrifice; to continue and go into a new field of activity, where competition was keen, was a great risk.

As in the work of every board of long standing, errors were committed. Everything considered, however, the board of trustees of Blinn Memorial College did exceedingly well. With the small resources at their command, and counting the average expenses of the school only \$10,000 a year for fifty-one years, over a half million dollars, exclusive of the permanent investments in grounds and buildings, equipment and maintenance fund, went through the channels of the institution.

For a permanent record, we let the names of the members of this board follow. Some of them were financial agents of the school, others served as presidents and secretaries of the board, others, again, worked on important committees.

## TRUSTEES

Rev. Wm. Pfaeffle	H. Wellmann	Rev. C. W. Bergquist
M. W. Mann	Rev. O. Riebe	Rev. B. E. Breihan
Rev. J. C. Albrecht	Rev. E. C. Draeger	Rev. L. J. Rode
Rev. H. Dietz	Rev. J. Ott	G. A. Kunkel
L. A. Niebuhr	Gustave Urbantke	Rev. Everett Frey
Rev. C. Urbantke	Rev. J. J. Kienle	J. P. Campbell
	Rev. C. Schuler	W. F. Finck
* * * * *	L. F. Kneese	Rev. E. Lundblad
	Jacob Martin	Rev. J. F. Sarnier
F. Thuelemyer	Rev. W. A. Moers	Frank Jensen
Rev. D. Matthaei	Henry Raeke	Ben Kneese
Rev. G. Koch	F. Brandenberger	D. C. Fischer
Rev. R. Brueck	Henry Breihan	Rev. W. B. Morgan
Rev. J. C. Groth	John B. Meyers	Rev. W. A. Ward
Rev. Wm. Felsing	H. C. Hodde	James B. Meyer
Ferdinand Niebuhr	John Wiedemann	E. A. Eversberg
Fritz Blumberg	Rev. A. A. Leifeste	F. L. Amsler
E. W. Hander	Wm. Wendt	Rev. Ben Behrens
Rev. H. Homburg	F. H. Miller	W. C. J. Marquardt
Rev. Boezinger	A. L. Niebuhr	W. E. Hoting
Rev. A. J. Traeger	Rev. Wm. Buehrer	Rev. H. C. Leonard
Rev. G. Schulze	Rev. J. W. A. Witt	Edwin Hohlt
E. W. Blinn	L. C. Holze	H. C. Hafer
Rev. John Streit	Rev. E. F. Schuessler	H. E. Draeger
Otto Rau	Rev. Phil. Deschner	Rev. Percy Beck
Rev. John Hierholzer	D. C. Blumberg	C. L. Wilkins,
Rev. G. Dosdall	T. A. Low	Endowment Treas.
Rev. C. Blinn	Rev. C. F. Bohmfalk	

PART TWO

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ORGANIZATION, DEVELOPMENT  
AND  
STRUGGLES  
OF  
THE JUNIOR COLLEGE  
(1927-1934)



## CHAPTER VII.

## PHILIP DESCHNER ADMINISTRATION

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THE JUNIOR COLLEGE VENTURE

Mr. Breihan had been elected with the hope that things would change for the better. It was soon found, however, that the school had not been suffering in former years because of its president but that the school authorities were facing new and adverse educational conditions that had to be met. One of these was, as pointed out above, the fact that academies had run their course and, with the exception of a few of the military type, were no longer in demand. Another condition was the fact that the people of the conference as a whole, scattered over Texas and Louisiana, had their own public high schools at home and could no longer be expected to send their children to Blinn, which also was only of high school rank.

The school must, therefore, enter into a new field of service or be abandoned. A committee was appointed by the board, June, 1926, to survey the whole situation as to requirements and possibilities of organizing a junior college. This committee reported to a called meeting of the board, October, 1926, that the Department of Education required five departments to begin the college, and that three teachers heading these departments must have a Master's degree and the other department heads must have their work for this degree well under way and complete it just as soon as possible.

The committee also reported that the school had a debt of \$25,000, and that \$26,000 were needed to start the junior college—\$15,000 for salaries, \$5,000 for repairs and improvements, \$4,000 for advertisements, and \$2,000 for additions to the library. This committee, therefore, recommended that Brenham, Washington County, and the conference be asked to raise \$51,000 to pay the debt and get the institution started. If the greater part of these funds could not be raised in Brenham and Washington County,

the school would either have to be abandoned or moved to a more favorable place.<sup>38</sup>

The junior college movement received some encouragement from a letter by Dr. Lundberg, of Austin, to the board, in which he gave them some hopes that the Texas Wesleyan College might be merged with Blinn under certain conditions. Not all the Swedes, however, were as magnanimous as was Dr. Lundberg. When the merger of the conferences took place several years ago, the Southern German Conference at once admitted the Swedes as well as the members of the Gulf Conference to the benefits of the ministers' endowment fund which consisted of about \$25,000. It was taken for granted that the conference would also merge its educational institutions as soon as possible. Had this been done, the conference could have maintained a junior college at least as long as the conference existed. But the Blinn Board soon received a rather unpleasant surprise when the news came that the Texas Wesleyan Board had voted down the proposition of merging the two schools. Perhaps the Blinn authorities should not have gone on with the plan of organizing a junior college after this. Doing so nevertheless, necessitated borrowing heavily, for the campaign for funds in Brenham and Washington County amounted to only \$18,000 in pledges, a great part of which was never collected, and in the conference as a whole collections were extremely light.

The board now pinned its hopes on a large enrollment, which might be expected in a few years and which would become the source of a great part of the revenue needed for the school. But, right along with the development of the junior college program, hard times set in. Only two years later the country experienced one of the greatest financial crashes in modern history, and the college enrollment, although it increased, was not large enough to meet even the major part of the current expenses. The result was that the school added deficit to deficit each year, so that by 1934 the debt of 1926 had become more than \$75,000, or more than threefold.

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38. *Trustees' Minutes*, June 7, 1926, pp. 328-329.

The organization of the junior college progressed. The faculty was asked to work out a curriculum based on five departments to begin with. Committees on faculty, finances, repairs and improvements were appointed. The committee on finances soon made a favorable report from Austin, where it had gone to consult with the State Department of Education as to the financing of the college.

The election of teachers was considered at the meeting of March 3, 1927. The election of the president having been deferred, however, it was decided to wait with the election of teachers until a president had been chosen. At a meeting of March 9, 1927, Mr. Breihan handed in his resignation as president to "clear the field," declaring, at the same time, his willingness to accept the position as head of the Department of Bible. This big-hearted move on the part of Mr. Breihan was much appreciated by the members of the board, for it set them free now to look for a president anywhere they desired.

A joint committee, three members of the Board, and two citizens of Brenham, was appointed to recommend a man for president of the proposed junior college. On March 10, 1927, this committee made its report to the board, recommending Dr. Philip Deschner. He, however, refused to give his answer then and was given about a week's time to consider. The committee further recommended that Dr. Deschner be offered \$4,000 and house, and that he be elected for a term of three years with the idea of the term becoming permanent. This offer Dr. Deschner accepted at the next called meeting of the board, however on his own conditions as to how he thought the campaign for a larger Blinn should be carried on. The trustees had a great deal of confidence in Dr. Deschner and accepted his plan.<sup>39</sup>

The board then proceeded to elect the faculty. The "regulars" were elected and the rest were to be appointed by the President and the Executive Committee. Miss Angela Niebuhr, B. E. Breihan, and C. F. Schmidt were elected to head the respective departments of English, Bible, and History.

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39. Trustees' Minutes, March 10, 1927, p. 341.

Dr. Deschner took charge about May 1, 1927, and proceeded at once to complete the faculty. Mr. Thomas Perrin, who had taught science in Blinn the previous year, was given the task of organizing the science department of the junior college. Mr. H. A. Brooks, of Kansas, was appointed head of the commercial department and instructor in Economics, while Miss Laura Wendt was given charge of Mathematics. Miss Alice Mae Schneider, now Mrs. H. A. Brooks, was appointed Secretary to the President and was given supervision of the girls in the dormitory. At the same time she was doing sophomore work in the college. Mrs. Alice Clay Watson, sophomore student, took charge of the library. The music department was not raised to college rank, and Mrs. Kate E. McAdam was left in charge.

With these rather inadequate preparations the school opened its first session as a junior college, retaining, at the same time, the four years' work in the academy, with the idea of dropping the first two years' work soon. About twenty-four fully qualified freshmen registered, and about eight sophomores, some of whom the college examiner would not rate as sophomores. This situation failed to meet the requirements necessary to obtain recognition, a goal toward which the administration of the school was looking with a great deal of anxiety.

The library was soon in a fairly good shape, as far as the supply of books was concerned. Some of the departments had a good supply of books on hand; others had to be built from the bottom up. This condition necessitated the purchasing of hundreds of volumes. Shelves had to be installed, a reading room provided for, and, most of all, a filing and recording system adopted.

Mr. Perrin had the other great task of bringing the science department up to the standard. Laboratory tables had to be installed, much apparatus and other equipment purchased. He succeeded well with the chemistry laboratory and classes, but the biology laboratory and classes did not pass inspection that year.

One of the weakest points in the organization of the junior college that year was the registrar's office, because of the fact that there was nothing in readiness to work



with. Dr. Deschner undertook to work out a card system of registration but it did not answer the purpose at all, and was used only one year. It remained for Mr. T. P. Walker, who came to Blinn the following year, to raise the organization of the registrar's office up to the required standard.

When, therefore, the college examiner came a few months after the opening, there was much he could criticise. Every one on the faculty realized that the school could not be recognized as a standard junior college, so the next best was hoped for, and that was tentative recognition. Every teacher had to pass investigation of credits and experience. There were those who had to do considerable work before the Department of Education was satisfied. Every department in the new organization was examined separately; and, as stated before, the Biology Department was not recognized. The enrollment was entirely inadequate. But to give the school a chance, tentative recognition was granted.

With such a small enrollment as this for the first session, desperate efforts were made to have at least the minimum enrollment for both the freshmen and the sophomore classes at the beginning of the second session. How to do that, was the question. There were those who advised that a winning football team, with a popular coach, would get the students. That idea was accepted by the uninitiated president to his own sorrow and that of all of those who had an opportunity to see results at first hand. J. V. Sykes, of A. and M. College fame, was employed as coach and sent out by the president to "bring them in", which he did. Blinn had a winning team, to be sure, the next year with her football squad of forty-four, but she gained only a very few good students among these; and, what was worse, the school collected no tuition nor board from most of them. The young and ambitious coach was given a free hand in purchasing football paraphernalia, so that there was about \$10,000 of unpaid tuition and board besides a heavy debt incurred during that year. It was a sad experience.



## DR. PHILIP DESCHNER

The Board had realized that the organization of a junior college called for a man with considerable prestige and leadership. This man they found in Dr. Philip Deschner, who had a fine college training and had made his mark as a pastor. There was one fault in this choice, which Dr. Deschner soon realized himself, and that was that a college presidency was entirely out of his line of training and experience. Dr. Deschner had made good as a student and as a pastor. No student in Blinn ever attracted more attention than did Philip Deschner because of the determination with which he mastered the difficulties that confronted him in school. He was an outstanding speaker as a student of Blinn, and when he finally entered the ministry, he took his place among the best prepared. So there was reason to think that he would perhaps make a great educational leader. The chances are that he would have, had not the conditions under which he had to work been so difficult to begin with. The situation called for an experienced school man, which Dr. Deschner was not.

Philip Deschner was born in Austria-Hungary, 1885, and came to America as a lad. His family settled near Goliad, Texas, where he worked on a farm till 1905, when he entered Blinn Memorial College. In 1909 he entered Central Wesleyan College, from which he graduated in 1912 with the B. A. degree. The following fall he entered Boston University and completed his seminary work, receiving the S. T. B. degree in 1915. He continued his studies, however, and in 1922 received the S. T. D. degree from the Boston University. In 1915 he entered the Oregon Conference and was made Field Secretary of the Anti-Saloon League. During the World War, he came to Texas and accepted the position of Camp Pastor in Camp Travis. After the War, he entered the Southern German Conference and was given a charge in New Orleans, where he built a \$100,000 church.

Dr. Deschner took up the work in Blinn with much hope and enthusiasm. He believed that his first task was to resell Blinn to the people of the conference and of Brenham and Washington County. To do this, he spoke

in many congregations and at many public occasions. But seemingly, the churches responded with no degree of enthusiasm. The reasons were real ones. Blinn was no longer needed in the training of ministers for the conference, her high school courses had no appeal for the people any longer, and the junior college was a venture that was highly uncertain. So the only appeal the Doctor had left was the Christian influence the school would offer and the instruction which was second to none. The promised funds were not coming in as had been expected. Not one-half of the \$35,000 that the citizens of Brenham and Washington County were to contribute were subscribed, and much less was paid; and the same was true of the \$16,000 that the conference was to raise.<sup>40</sup> One redeeming feature in the whole situation was the fact that Blinn had been given "B-standing" as a junior college that year. But the president's health failed him that fall and winter, so that he began to think of resigning, which he finally did on March 1, 1929, to go back into the pastorate, for which he was well prepared.

The debts of the school had greatly increased in less than two years of the junior college experiment. A large part of that debt was to be expected because of some of the reasons given above. Repairs had to be made, much new equipment purchased, and a higher salary scale paid to teachers in order to comply with junior college standards, etc. In order to meet all these additional costs and because the income of the college fell far below the mark that had been set, bonds had to be issued, encumbering the Main Building with a mortgage and giving the income of the Maintenance Fund as a guarantee to pay interest on these bonds and to retire them.

A good deal of these debts could have been avoided had there been a background of experience in the organizing of a junior college. None of the teachers had ever taught in a college before, although some of them had considerable teaching experience, and the president was a minister of the Gospel. There is no doubt that if expert

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40. President Deschner's Report to the Board, Dec. 1, 1927, p. 19,

leadership would have been employed, much more happiness would have accompanied this new venture.

### FACULTY MEMBERS

H. A. Brooks, B. S., M. B. A., is a native of the State of Kansas. He attended the Kansas Wesleyan University, but did the major part of his work in the University of Kansas, from which he graduated with both the B. S. degree in Business and the M. B. A. degree. Professor Brooks was a graduate student of Northwestern University one summer. For several years he was a member of the faculty of the Port Arthur Commercial College.

He came to Blinn the year the junior college was organized. Besides his work as head of the Business Administration Department, he was given charge of the finances and general supervision of all the secretarial work of the school. He soon brought system into the office, where there was rather much confusion when he entered. He is quite an active church worker, and his kind and even nature has endeared him to many.

Miss Laura Wendt, M. A., born and reared in Washington County, graduated from the Brenham High School, taught in the public schools of Washington County and later entered Southwest Texas State Teachers College at San Marcos, from which she received her B. A. degree. After this she was elected a member of the faculty of the Brenham High School. When Dr. Deschner organized the faculty of the Blinn Junior College, he appointed Miss Wendt instructor in Mathematics. From 1930-1931 she took a year's leave of absence to go to the University of Texas, from which she received the M. A. degree at the following June commencement. Miss Wendt was a very efficient teacher and a useful member on the faculty. She resigned in the fall of 1933 to accept work in the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Mrs. Alice Clay Watson was one of the first two graduates of the Blinn Junior College. She had done the equivalent of her freshman work elsewhere. Dr. Deschner gave her the task of organizing the library. This position she has held from the beginning, and what the library is

today, it is largely the result of her efforts. Mrs. Watson has always taught a few classes in academy history or English along with her work as librarian.

T. P. Walker, M. A., was elected a member of the Blinn faculty in 1928. He is a native Texan, having been reared in the northern part of the state. He graduated from the North Texas State Normal at Denton, taught in the public schools as classroom teacher, was principal of high schools and superintendent of town and city schools. He entered the University of Texas, from which he received both his B. A. and M. A. degrees.

Professor Walker is the head of the Department of Education and Government, and the Registrar of Blinn College. He has made the registrar's office highly efficient, and he is an authority in his field of work.

Mrs. H. A. Brooks, formerly Miss Alice Mae Schneider, was born and reared in San Antonio, Texas, where she enjoyed the advantages of a good elementary and high school education. From 1924 to 1926 she attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Going back to San Antonio, she entered the junior college there, doing freshman work. Dr. Deschner induced her to come to Blinn because the school needed sophomores; at the same time Miss Schneider would be quite an asset to the school because of her ability as secretary to the President and because of her influence among the students. From 1928-1929 she attended the Southern Methodist University, from which she received her B. A. degree at the June commencement the following year. Returning to Blinn, she was given charge of the Bible classes, and she taught English classes at times. She has been Treasurer and Dean of Women. In the latter capacity she is still active today. Mrs. Brooks is much in demand in civic, school, and church activities.

J. V. Sikes, popularly known as "Sikie Sikes," was a star on the A. and M. College football team, 1924-1928. He was employed on the Blinn faculty as coach and instructor in some of the academy branches, 1928-1929. He developed a powerful football team which smashed almost all opposing teams that year, including the Texas fresh-

men. However, the experiment with that kind of athletics proved entirely unsatisfactory; hence he was not re-employed for the following year.

Mrs. Thomas Perrin taught the Spanish classes during the first year of the junior college, and Miss Gladys Worley, M. A., graduate of the University of Texas, was instructor of Spanish the year 1928 to 1929.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### A. A. GRUSENDORF ADMINISTRATION (1929-1934)

#### "PROTEM"

At the same session of the Board when the resignation of Dr. Deschner was accepted, arrangements were made for the supervision of the school for the rest of the semester. I was given general charge of the academic affairs of the school, B. E. Breihan was appointed Business Manager and Treasurer, and H. A. Brooks, Financial Secretary. A committee was appointed to employ teachers needed for the coming year, and a local committee, consisting of E. A. Eversberg, Edwin Hohlt, and myself, was appointed to make recommendations as to candidates for the presidency of the college.

As usual, funds were lacking. The board, therefore, instructed the Treasurer of the Endowment Fund to purchase to the extent of \$25,000 of the B. M. C. bonds, issued in 1928, in installments as needed by the school. He was authorized to make such sales of the Endowment Fund as were necessary to make these purchases.<sup>41</sup>

Our local committee began to approach men who, we thought, were suitable for the presidency of Blinn. Dean O. A. Ulrich of Southwestern University, Dr. Wm. Felsing of the University of Texas, and Mr. G. F. Urbantke of Austin were asked to consider the proposition seriously, but, to our disappointment, not one of them saw his way clear to accept the offer we were authorized to make. In the meantime, however, several men had made application for the presidency. After quite a bit of investigation, the committee recommended Professor A. A. Grusendorf, of the Canyon State Teachers College, as being the man we needed. At a called session of the board in May, 1929, Mr. Grusendorf was elected. He returned to the Teachers College to finish the work of the term, and he took charge of affairs at Blinn in June.

41. *Trustee Minutes, New Record*, Feb. 21, 1929, p. 33.

## PRESIDENT A. A. GRUSENDORF

"What good thing may come from the little town of Lexington, Texas?" one may ask after the fashion of a similar question recorded in Holy Writ. Yet many an obscure place has brought forth leaders who have helped mankind.

Professor Grusendorf grew up near Lexington in a humble home in which the great and lasting principles of Christian citizenship were taught and practiced. He grew up to young manhood before he had the opportunity of obtaining a high school education. In 1914 he came to Blinn Memorial College, doing some preparatory, but largely high school, work. As so many other young men had to do, he worked his way through school. The next year he attended the North Texas State Normal at Denton, receiving from it a teacher's certificate. For several years he taught school in Falls County. He then took up blacksmithing at Riesel, Texas, until he was called to the colors in 1917. Coming back from the army, he entered Baylor University, from which he, in due time, graduated with both the B. A. and M. A. degrees.

In rather short succession he held such positions as principal of city high schools, dean of a junior college, and a professorship in the Sam Houston State Teachers College and in the Canyon State Teachers College. In the summer of 1928 he did post graduate work in the University of Texas.

Why should a man leave a professorship in a State college to accept the presidency of a church school with a very precarious financial basis? This question has been asked. There are perhaps several answers. First of all, Blinn was the school that gave Mr. Grusendorf a start in his educational career. He naturally felt grateful for this opportunity. Then, too, Blinn was the school of the small, struggling conference under whose influence he grew up. A certain attachment to the institution of his conference had its influence in his decision. More than all this, here was a real challenge for service, which has a strong appeal for any ambitious young man. The school had to be saved to serve in the future as it had in the past.

Professor Grusendorf was the second layman to be elected president of Blinn Memorial College. He was rather young for such an undertaking, but his training and experience equipped him as well for the task as perhaps any of his predecessors in that office of Blinn had been. His new undertaking was not out of line but right in line with what he had done before, only it was a step forward professionally.

He well needed the training and the experience to back him up, for he had a man's job to do. The financial condition of the school was rapidly going from bad to worse; the standardization had not been completed; and athletics had come to a stage where it was about to be the "tail that wags the dog." Besides that, there were other pressing problems that needed to be solved. His activities will be discussed as we proceed with the development of his administration.

## ATHLETICS

One of the first questions confronting his administration was athletics. There was so much dissatisfaction in the churches of the Southern Conference because of the extravagance with which money had been spent on athletics during that year, as well as with the type of athletes that the coach had brought into the school and the concessions made these students, that a change in coaches, as well as in policy, was positively demanded. In looking around, therefore, for a new athletic director, a happy solution was found in the choice of Mr. Frank Allenson, B. A., who had been coach and teacher of science in the Brenham High School during the past few years, where he had made a good record. Mr. Allenson was a fine specimen of manhood and a safe and sane athletic director. He remained on the faculty one year, when he accepted the principalship of the Humble High School. He was later elected superintendent of that school.

Mr. Grusendorf, with the co-operation of the coach, had to battle against the idea of granting special privileges to athletes, especially to football men. But he soon placed athletics on a higher basis. Players were not given any

financial privileges any more than any other deserving students, nor were they lettered unless their scholastic records were up to the requirements just as well as their records on the field had to be.

With the school struggling as it did, it was thought that inter-collegiate football was too expensive. It was, therefore, discontinued, temporarily at least, 1934. No doubt, many schools, including Blinn, have carried on this expensive sport largely because it was thought a school could not exist without it. Presidents of Blinn have had a good deal of criticism brought against them in the past because, it was said, they were too conservative about football. Thinking men and women will admit, however, that this particular college sport has received emphasis all out of proportion to its usefulness and that it is too expensive for the small college.

In order that a sport, or physical training exercise, may be of benefit to a student body as a whole, it must reach practically all of them. Football is too limited. The fact is, it is not intended for a physical exercise primarily, but to furnish entertainment for the crowds. "School sports," says David in his **Junior High School Education**, "to be effective, should benefit all pupils, giving pleasure to the robust and strength to the weak." Football misses that purpose entirely.

Then, again, it was argued by the friends of this college sport that a winning team would increase the enrollment considerably. Our own experience and careful investigation do not bear out that argument. To quote from the Carnegie Foundation report on athletics, we read this: ". . . . the athletic reputation of a college or university, and especially its success at football, has little if anything to do with college registration. . . ." <sup>42</sup> Some of the universities and colleges with famous football teams for years have not increased their registration materially. We have examples of that in Texas and in other states.

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42. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; American Athletics, Bulletin No. 23, 1929, p. 293.



## NEW TEACHERS AND DEPARTMENTS

Rather numerous changes in faculty positions were made during the five years that Mr. Grusendorf had charge of Blinn. Some of these changes were due to additions of new departments, such as public speaking and music, but the larger number of changes were brought on by the development of new conditions.

When Mr. Grusendorf came to Brenham, Blinn needed a language teacher. A suitable man was found in Mr. Ernst Heyer, who had received a thorough training in the Technological University of Braunschweig, Germany. Coming to the United States, Mr. Heyer went to Canyon, Texas, where he did some special work in English and Spanish. Later he continued these studies in the University of Texas. Mr. Heyer is quite a linguist, being able to give instructions in Spanish, German, French, Greek, and Latin. He was on the Blinn faculty from 1929 to 1933.

The Science Department needed a teacher to organize the Biology classes and laboratory so as to bring these up to the standard. Mr. R. O. Berry, B. A., of the North Texas State Teachers College, was employed in 1929, and in the course of that year succeeded to get recognition for his work with the State Department of Education and the Association of Texas Colleges.

Mrs. R. O. Berry did part-time work on the Blinn faculty these years, teaching English in both the Academy and the College Departments. In 1932 she and Mr. Berry resigned to go to A. and M. College of Texas, where Mr. Berry did graduate work and, at the same time, instructed classes in Biology.

Mr. Berry had been teaching all the college sciences during the last year. Hence, when he resigned, Blinn needed some one able to teach at least Chemistry and Biology. Recommended very highly by Dr. Wm. Felsing and others of the Science Department of the University of Texas, Miss Eva Medaris, M. A., was appointed science teacher on the Blinn faculty. Miss Medaris has done very satisfactory work these years. She is a good instructor and a very useful member on the faculty.

Mr. H. W. Grant, M. A., graduate of Baylor University,



taught mathematics in Blinn during the regular session of 1930 to 1931, in place of Miss Laura Wendt, who had been given a leave of absence for that year. Mr. Grant's scholarship and dignity stamped him as a real professor.

Mrs. Gladys Frank Dalrymple, B. S., of the Kansas State Teachers College, Hays, Kansas, taught stenography and typewriting during the session of 1930 to 1931 to the satisfaction of all concerned.

A. S. Nemir, M. B. A., of the University of Texas, succeeded Mr. Allenson as athletic director and instructor of Social Science courses, 1931-1933. In 1933 Mr. P. L. Tracy, known among sportsmen as "Two-Gun" Tracy, took charge of athletics, but he did not teach.

The sudden death of Miss Angela Niebuhr, May, 1932, was followed by a number of rapid changes in the Department of English. For the rest of the session Mrs. H. A. Brooks, Mrs. Alice Clay Watson, and Mr. Carl Fischer took care of the English classes. For the next session the services of Mr. W. E. Gibson, of the University of Texas, were secured. Mr. Gibson held the M. A. degree and had done considerable work toward his Doctorate. He came well prepared to teach English. It was necessary, however, that he sever his connection with the college at the close of the first semester.

Miss Laura Lee Bird, M. A., of the College of Industrial Arts, daughter of the Reverend S. Moylan Bird, of Brenham, carried on the work of the English Department very satisfactorily for the remainder of the year after Mr. Gibson resigned.

Miss Welma Friedsam, M. A., was employed for the summer of 1933, and for the regular session following. But for reasons of her own she resigned at the close of the summer term.

It was very desirable by this time to bring back stability and more permanency to the instructorship of the English Department. As usual, a number of able teachers were found available for the work. Among these Miss Margaret Cotham, M. A., graduate of the University of Texas, stood out prominently. Mr. Grusendorf had been acquainted with Miss Cotham from his days in Hillsboro, where she had been instructor of English and Latin in

the high school in which he was principal. Miss Cotham had taught in the public schools of Texas for a number of years, and for ten years had been connected with the State Department of Education as Supervisor of High Schools during the administration of the late Superintendent S. M. N. Marrs. Miss Cotham ranks high among the instructors of English of the State, and Blinn is fortunate to have the services of such an able teacher.

Mr. Grusendorf is a lover of music and believes that an efficient music department is one of the best advertisements a school can have. Steps were, therefore, taken to bring Blinn's music classes up to college rank. In 1931 it was decided to get an instructor who had the academic and conservatory training, that work done under him in the Music Department would receive recognition. Accordingly, Mr. Carl Fischer, B. A., whose grandfather had been the first president of the college, and whose father had taught in Blinn for almost twenty years, was appointed instructor of voice and music, not including piano. Under his supervision classes were organized in public school music, harmony, and public speaking.

Mr. Fischer was a graduate of Central Wesleyan College, where he had done considerable work in voice and cornet, and had taken private instructions under several distinguished teachers. He was a good vocalist and an excellent chorus director. However conditions developed that made it necessary for him to sever his connection with Blinn in 1933.

In 1933 Mr. Grusendorf secured the services of Mrs. J. C. Lauderdale, who has had extensive training under eminent musical instructors and voice teachers. She is a graduate in piano of Sweet Briar College and she holds an Artist-Teacher diploma in piano and voice from the New York Conservatory of Music and Fine Arts. Mrs. Lauderdale was appointed piano and voice teacher for the year 1932-1933; but when Mr. Fischer resigned, she took charge of the Music Department.

The Blinn Chorus has rendered some high class programs since its reorganization in 1931 under Mr. Fischer and its continuance under Mrs. Lauderdale. The efficiency of the chorus has always depended, to some extent, upon

the talents the school has had among her students each year, of course.

The Department of Speech Art was first developed when Mr. Charles E. Palmer, B. A., B. D., came to Blinn in the fall of 1933. Mr. Palmer graduated from DePauw University and Garrett Biblical Institute. He was a talented reader and a successful instructor in his field of work.

Miss Alleeta Mae Swensson, M. A., succeeded Miss Laura Wendt as instructor of Mathematics. She taught during the remainder of the regular session and during the following summer session, 1934. Miss Swensson was a graduate of Baylor University and the University of Texas, and she was an experienced teacher. Her work in Blinn was done to the satisfaction of all concerned.

## MERGER

The financial situation of Blinn became more and more alarming. The leaders felt that something had to be done soon to prevent the necessity of closing the doors of the old institution. It was thought that merging with another institution of learning would be desirable, because it would at least give an opportunity of perpetuating the history of Blinn in some way and perhaps inject new life.

Mr. Grusendorf approached leaders of colleges on that proposition. Among others, the authorities of Southwestern University were seen, and they were favorably inclined. Soon committees were at work on the plan, and by November, 1930, the Blinn Board of Trustees was ready with definite terms to submit to the session of the Southern Conference, which met at Georgetown. With some modifications, these terms were ratified by the Board of Southwestern University, and in due time also ratified by all the participating conferences of the M. E. Church, South. Among the terms of the merger it was stipulated that all titles held by Blinn Memorial College be transferred to Southwestern University, that the Southern Conference become one of the participating conferences supporting Southwestern, and that ten trustees representing the

Southern Conference be elected on the board of the University.

With the merger completed, changes in the office forces of Blinn were necessary. Mr. Grusendorf resigned as President, and Dr. King Vivion was elected President of Blinn. I resigned as Dean, and Mr. Grusendorf was elected to that place.

The conference next proceeded to the appointment of a field agent to strengthen the financial side of the school, for it was decided that the Southern Conference should continue to support Blinn and that all directed gifts should flow into the treasury of the school.

With almost complete unanimity, the conference turned to the Reverend A. A. Leifeste, pastor of the Norhill M. E. Church of Houston. There were several reasons why A. A. Leifeste was chosen. Like many others, he was a loyal ex-student of Blinn. He had made good as a pastor on the charges he had served. More than all, he enjoyed the confidence and good will of the citizens of Brenham and Washington County more perhaps than any other minister in the conference. A. A. Leifeste had spent eleven years of his ministry in Brenham, and during the World War had worked with the people on their Red Cross and other war activities. He knows practically every family in Brenham.

He took up the work with a great deal of hope and courage, but the depression was on, and money was hard to get. Besides this, he suffered a serious accident which put him in the hospital for nearly two months and incapacitated him for field work for nearly half a year. One of his endeavors was to secure the Texas Wesleyan fund for Blinn, but even that arrangement miscarried. With his winning personality and his determination he would have been able to accomplish much for the school had conditions not been so adverse.<sup>43</sup>

The merger was a change, but it did not help the sit-

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43. At the annual session of the Southern Conference at Texas City, December, 1934, the controversy over the Texas Wesleyan property was settled in that it was conceded that this property belongs to the Southern Conference, and that it can be used only for educational purposes in the conference.



uation in a material way, and that for several reasons. First of all, the country passed through the severest financial crisis in its history, and all institutions were affected by it more or less. Furthermore, Blinn was too close to the abyss when the merger took place to stand long enough to test out the new situation. Then, again, Southwestern University had her own great financial struggles, which took all the attention of her leaders. All the merger could do was to postpone the total collapse of the old college, Blinn Memorial, for a few years.

### PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

There was in the past years no civic club organized to sponsor the interests of Blinn, but in 1930 a movement was started to bring into being an organization among the women of Brenham that would look after some of the interests of the college. An encouraging number of members was secured, and a club was organized under the name of Blinn Mothers Club. By the end of the year it obtained membership in the Texas Congress of Mothers and in the Parent-Teacher Association. Two years later it changed its name to Blinn Parent-Teacher Association.

This club has done some worthwhile things for the college. In a material way it has been of real assistance to the school. One thing that deserves mentioning here especially was the purchasing of a beautiful velvet curtain for the stage in the auditorium. Most of all, this club has been a booster of Blinn these last years.

### GOLDEN JUBILEE

Blinn Memorial College was nearing the fiftieth milestone in her service to the people. Preparations were, therefore, made to celebrate this event, June, 1933. A "Committee of Twenty-five" was appointed from among the ex-students to work out the general plan for the celebration. This committee in turn appointed other committees to work out details of the festivities. The great event of the occasion was to be a pageant presenting in brief the history of the school. Mrs. E. P. Anderson, a



prominent and talented ex-student of Blinn, was appointed to write the pageant, which she did creditably, entitling it "Through the Years with Blinn." A large stage, built in front of the Main Building, was designed by Mrs. John Low Chappell. Perhaps never in the history of the school did a larger crowd gather on the Blinn campus than on the night of June 2, 1933, to see the pageant.

Although a large number of former Blinn students came to see these exercises, and although quite a bit of enthusiasm was stirred up, every one acquainted with the financial situation could only be apprehensive for the future of the school. The editor of the **Texas Stern** wrote in part, July, 1933, concerning the Golden Jubilee of Blinn: ". . . . . The beginning of the next fifty years of the school is hardly any brighter than was the beginning of the first fifty years. That the pressing financial situation hung like a heavy fog over the festivities was not difficult to notice. . . . ."

## THE END OF THE WAY

The financial situation of the school became more critical. Practically all sources of income, except tuition, had ceased contributing. The creditors were pressing for pay the first of each month. Although the salaries of the teachers had been greatly reduced, only a little more than half of that was paid. Things could not continue that way much longer.

It was at this juncture that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, appointed a commission to study the entire educational field of the Church, with the guiding idea of concentrating the resources of the Church on fewer institutions. This would, of course, mean the elimination of a number of struggling schools in Southern Methodism. Among others, this commission recommended that Blinn College be discontinued as soon as practicable. This, then, called for action by Blinn authorities.

Mr. Grusendorf began to work on the plan of organizing a junior college district to take over Blinn on a tax-supported basis. Washington County not having the minimum amount of taxable wealth as required by the laws

of Texas, it was thought that Austin County might join such a district. Proper local and State authorities were, therefore, consulted on the plan of a bi-county district. Encouragement being given all along, a meeting of the Executive Committee of Blinn and the members of the Board of Trustees of Southwestern University representing the Southern Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was called on October 16, 1933, at which time the plan was unanimously approved that Blinn Memorial College be taken over by Washington and Austin Counties.<sup>44</sup> This plan was then approved by the Board of Southwestern University, and everything went along well until the day on which the two Commissioners Courts were preparing the orders for an election, when several citizens of Bellville, Texas, appeared in the Austin County Commissioners Court with an injunction against further procedure with the plan.

The injunction brought on a very perplexing situation. Would Blinn have to close her doors? Southwestern University, by resolution of her board, had decided to discontinue operating Blinn after June, 1934. In this emergency the citizens of Brenham pledged an acceptable amount each month for eighteen months for the maintenance of the school. The Main Building was leased from Southwestern University, with the option to purchase the building or the entire plant by 1937. The school was chartered as a private, non-sectarian institution, with a board of nine regents, under the name of Blinn College.

The members of the original board of the newly chartered school were H. G. Broesche, president, J. M. Bryan, C. D. Dallmeyer, Fred Heineke, W. E. Hoting, H. A. Kelling, W. J. Sloan, Albert Stone, and W. R. Stuckert.

There were no changes made in the membership of the faculty which, at the time, constituted itself as follows: A. A. Grusendorf, M. A., President; C. F. Schmidt, M. A., Dean and Instructor in History; T. P. Walker, M. A., Registrar and Instructor in Education and Government; H. A. Brooks, M. B. A., Treasurer and Instructor in Business; Miss Margaret Cotham, M. A., Instructor in English; Miss

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44. Trustees' Minutes, *New Record*, October 16, 1933, p. 106.

Eva Medaris, M. A., Instructor in Science; Miss Alleeta Mae Swensson, M. A., Instructor in Mathematics; Mrs. Alice Clay Watson, Librarian; Mrs. H. A. Brooks, B. A., Dean of Women; Mrs. George Neu, Superintendent of the Boarding Department.

On Founders' Day, March 28, 1934, the transition from the old institution to the new was observed with appropriate ceremonies. In the morning of that day a program was presented to signify the closing of the old Blinn Memorial College. The writer presided. The Reverend A. A. Leifeste, Field Agent and long intimately connected with the school, delivered the address of the occasion. He spoke of the struggles, the achievements and the far-reaching influence of the institution now about to close its doors. President Grusendorf spoke briefly, and the College Chorus sang "Lest We Forget." Aching hearts were present at these ceremonies.

At night of the same day, in the presence of a large audience and many distinguished guests, who represented higher institutions of learning of the State, the opening of the new Blinn was observed. These exercises were held in the Brenham High School auditorium, where Superintendent M. B. Holleman, of the Brenham public schools, presided. Dr. T. D. Brooks, Dean of the Department of Liberal Arts of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, was introduced and spoke briefly. Other visitors representing various higher institutions of learning in Texas were introduced and brought brief messages of congratulation and good wishes for the new school. They were: Dr. C. E. Evans, President of Southwest Texas State Teachers College; Dr. Allen Gilbert Flowers, Dean of the School of Law, Baylor University; Dr. Benjamin Floyd Pittenger, Dean of Education of the University of Texas; State Superintendent L. A. Woods; Mr. W. A. Nelson of the State Department of Education, College Examiner; Professor S. C. Wilson, Professor of Agriculture, Sam Houston State Teachers College; Dr. O. A. Ulrich, Dean of Southwestern University; and Dr. John C. Hardy, President of Baylor Female College. Dr. Frederick Eby of the University of Texas was the principal speaker of the evening, and he delivered an address on "The Value of a

College to a Community." He was followed by A. A. Grusendorf, President of Blinn College, who spoke briefly on "The Personnel and Function of Blinn College." Greetings were sent by other institutions who could not send representatives for the occasion.

Blinn College, as organized in March, 1934, was to be only temporary. As soon as the Forty-fourth Legislature had modified the law so that Washington County could organize itself into a junior college district, an election was arranged for on May 11, 1935, which gave the citizens of the county an opportunity to vote on the question. The people of Brenham voted seven to one in favor of the district and all other measures, but the rural boxes overcame this majority by about 280 votes. Brenham could have carried this election in spite of the rural precincts, but only 585 votes were cast in the city. On general elections Brenham cast over twelve hundred votes.

After the failure of the election on May 11, a good deal of confusion prevailed as to what should be done with the school. Should the leaders give up and close the doors of Blinn? There were voices heard that favored that very thing. But, in spite of discouragements, there were many who were hoping that some way might be found that would make it possible to continue the operation of the school.

President A. A. Grusendorf, together with the Chamber of Commerce, worked out a plan which called for the selling of fifty thousand dollars worth of four per cent bonds, for which to purchase the school plant and improve it, but this plan was dropped as impossible after a rather unenthusiastic attempt to sell these bonds. Then the Catholics proposed to purchase the school plant. But the citizens of Brenham found the demand for their part of the purchase too great; hence that plan was also given up.

The time for the school to get ready for the opening of another session was very short. What was to be done had to be done quickly. To do that it took men who are intimately acquainted with every need and possibility of the school. Therefore, upon the request of President Grusendorf the board had the charter of the school so amended that the administrative officers of the college will con-



stitute the corporation and directors of the school, and that, at the same time, they have the right to elect three other members on this board. All of this was done in a few days. The new board now consists of President A. A. Grusendorf, Dean C. F. Schmidt, Registrar T. P. Walker, and Treasurer H. A. Brooks. These have organized and elected Almot Schlenker, Cashier of the First National Bank, J. E. Weisler, Attorney, and R. C. Barnes of the Barnes Cotton Company, and this completed the new organization.

It is the plan of the new board to elect about forty leading business and professional men over the State to constitute a board of visitors of the school. Through these men it is hoped to further the interests of the college and to aid students in finding employment after graduation.

It is the plan of the board to issue bonds for the purchase and improvement of the plant. The curriculum will be broadened. The courses in the arts and sciences will be as formerly, but there will be added a department of bookkeeping, accounting and business administration and a department of secretarial work. In each of these departments work will be offered covering two years, which should give any student opportunity to prepare himself thoroughly for a position in the business world.

Blinn authorities have the assurance that the school will continue its rank as "class-A" junior college. The high rank the college holds in the scholarship of her students attending the University of Texas will also be guarded carefully in the future.

Come what may to this educational project, the founders of the old school have built well. They made great sacrifices in the support and building up of this center of education. Most of them lived hundreds of miles away from the place where the school they supported all these years was located. Yet they sent in their money, not as a business investment, but as an investment the returns of which must be evaluated in spiritual terms. The brick and frame buildings that were erected were the least in this great undertaking. They will crumble into dust some day. The greatest achievements of this educational enterprise, undertaken by the fathers of German Methodism in



Texas, are the spiritual structures that have resulted in the lives of men and women because of their contact with the college.

Blinn College is just a slightly different name, but the ex-students and friends would have it so. With the same buildings, equipment, and campus of the old institution, the new college comes into possession of something for which it labored not. The greatest inheritance, however, that the new Blinn takes over consists of the traditions and the past history of the old school. Will the Blinn of the future uphold the ideals of its predecessor, the essence of which was that no man is truly educated unless he has adopted into his life the great principles of the Lowly Nazarine? Verily, if the spirit of Blinn Memorial College is perpetuated in this way in her successor, the courage and faith of her founders will stand forth even greater and more sublime!

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